THE ISLAMIC STATE

A COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF JIHADIST WARFARE

ANTHONY CELSO

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For Alicia, Diana and Jezebel

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Acknowledgments

This book builds upon the past scholarship of many noted authorities. Among those, the ideas and research of Jeffrey Kaplan, Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, Aaron Zelin, Jacob Zenn, Michael WS Ryan, Brian Fishman, William McCants, Fernando Reinares, Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi and Thomas Hegghammer have been particularly influential. They have provided the corpus of ideas and body of research without which this book is impossible. Comparable gratitude must also be extended to the research done by The Long War Journal, The Institute for the Study of War, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, Elcano Royal Institute and the Jamestown Foundation. The quality work done by these institutions is without peer. Finally, the support I received from my colleagues (Dr. Bruce Bechtol Jr. and Dr. William Taylor) has encouraged me to write this book.

Introduction

The Islamic State in Comparative Context

The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) resurgence from its near 2010 defeat and its later territorial extension across the Levant was a significant development. The Syrian civil war and the power vacuum left by the American disengagement in Iraq after 2011 enabled ISI to reconstitute its terror network.[1] Freed from American influence the Iraqi regime led by Nouri al-Maliki pursued a sectarian agenda that alienated the Sunni minority and allowed ISI to present itself as their *defender*. Baghdad's anti-Sunni policies became the wellspring of ISI's popular support.

From 2011 to 2014 ISI's terror and insurgent campaigns degraded Iraqi security forces allowing the organization to conquer territory.[2] Capitalizing on Assad's poorly defended eastern border with Iraq, ISI forces expanded into Syria. With Damascus's near abandonment of its border with Iraq, ISI steadily displaced other rebel groups. Constructing a ministate around its administrative capital Raqqa, ISI was able to create a transnational network later renamed as Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS).[3]

ISIS's formation generated shock waves across the region. By summer 2014 ISIS routed the Iraqi army and seized territory in Northwest Iraq occupying Mosul and much of Anbar Province. ISIS punctuated its territorial conquests with high-profile massacres of Shi'ite soldiers and Iraqi Yazidi communities.[4] In late June 2014 ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani announced the creation of a caliphate (called the Islamic State—IS) and an end to colonial-era borders.[5]

Since August 2014 a US-led coalition of sixty nations has uprooted IS's reign across the Levant. By late 2017 Mosul and Raqqa were conquered. The IS's ability to withstand the coalition's military assault for over three years was remarkable. *Destroying* and *degrading* the caliphate was difficult.

This accomplishment should not be confused with the destruction of IS's terror-insurgent movement. It endures.

The network's global reach is highlighted by its terrorist attacks in Paris, Sousse, Barcelona, Manchester, London, New York, Stockholm, Nice, Brussels, Dacca, Berlin, Beirut, Sana, Istanbul, St. Petersburg, San Bernardino, Orlando and Ankara. The movement's continued violence even after the demise of its transnational state in 2017 suggests resiliency.

The IS's ascent is unequalled among jihadist organizations. Its June 2014 caliphate creation satisfies an extremist aspiration that has endured since Turkish leader Kemal Ataturk's 1924 abolition of the Ottoman Empire. Such a desire was considered a long-term goal by virtually all jihadists. Based on his formation of a transnational jihadist state IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (self-proclaimed as Caliph Ibrahim) controversially demanded the loyalty of the Muslim world and urged their emigration [*hijrah*] to his caliphate.[6] Though its leadership of the Islamic extremist movement is contested by the Taliban and its Al Qaeda (AQ) allies, the IS is the world's most preeminent jihadist organization.

The group's threat to the international order transcends all other terror networks including AQ. Its proto-jihadist state eclipsed the nineteenth-century Sudanese Mahdist regime that also threatened Western interests. Its policy of *baqiya wa tatamaddad* [remaining and expanding] drove it to conquer territories in pursuit of its state-building project.[7] This book analyzes the IS within a comparative framework of past jihadist experiments.

Modern jihadism is notable for its failures making IS's state-building project puzzling. The Islamist record in the 1980s and 1990s is especially dismal with jihadist movements in Egypt, Libya, Syria and Algeria *defeated* by security services. What accounts for IS's success in light of these debacles and will the IS's movement endure? These two questions shape this study. By employing a comparative framework the book overcomes the limitations of singular studies of terror movements. Though rich in theoretical and empirical detail, books by William McCants, Loretta Napoleoni, Charles Lister, Patrick Cockburn, Michael Weiss, J. M. Berger and Jessica Stern offer us an important snapshot of IS without putting its development within a larger comparative context.[8] Works by Daniel Byman

and Jason Burke are limited to a comparative assessment of AQ, the IS and their affiliates without putting them into a deeper framework.[9] It neither effectively explains the resiliency and growing brutality of jihadist insurgency.

A comparative model offers a richer canvass for exploration of why IS succeeded and others failed. The IS's accomplishments, moreover, may be connected to previous failures. The network's adaptive strategy compensates for the shortcomings that have impaired past jihadist insurgencies. Evidence suggests that the IS learned from the failure of its AQ in Iraq (AQI) predecessor and from the decline of its AQ Central progenitor. William McCants argues that IS reformatted its ideological message and strategy in light of its predecessor's failures.[10] IS began its reconfiguration during the US occupation of Iraq. Imprisoned at the American detention center Camp Bucca extremist militants and former Baathists plotted and conspired to reinvigorate jihadist insurgency. The network of allegiances developed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi at this prison would eventually evolve into the core leadership of what would become the Islamic State. Once the Americans left Baghdadi and his inner coterie were able to rebuild ISI into a formidable terrorist and insurgent network.

Capitalizing on Baghdad's repression of the Sunni minority in post US Iraq and the Syrian civil war's sectarian hatreds, ISI was able to secure Sunni tribal support for its insurgent movement. The group's pragmatic alliance with Baathist insurgent groups augmented its fighting capacity. Its embrace of a sectarian and apocalyptic worldview and its expansion into eastern Syria produced unprecedented divisions within the jihadist movement. Its break from AQ in February 2014 shows a dramatic divergence in strategic and ideological paths. IS's media inveigh against AQ and lambasts the treacherous *apostate* behavior of Zawahiri's then Syrian affiliate *Jabhat al-Nusra* (JN).[11]

The IS is the latest phase of an evolving jihadist terror wave. Measured by its capacity to strike across the world, the IS is an unparalleled terror threat. The network's success may be attributable to its break from traditional forms of jihadist warfare.

THE SEARCH FOR A METATHEORY OF TERRORIST WARFARE

Islamist insurgency has been a focus of social science investigation. Some of this literature examines terrorism's cyclical character.[12] One subset of this inquiry involves the development of a metatheory explaining terrorist violence. A number of research efforts stand out.[13] Among them is David Rapoport's *four waves* of modern terrorism that explains the rise of the anarchist, anti-colonial, left-wing and Islamist terrorism. Each of these waves exhibit common features.

His theory is widely cited in the academic literature and admired for its robust yet parsimonious structure.[14] Rapoport argues that modern terror waves are facilitated by advancements in global transport and communication systems. Technological innovations in these networks assisted in the global diffusion of violent political movements. Often terror cycles are triggered by wars and foreign occupation of *oppressed* peoples.

Some of these waves like the anarchists of the nineteenth century were catalyzed by utopian ideals that rejected the Westphalian state order, others like the twentieth-century anti-colonial movements were driven by a nationalist agenda against foreign occupation of *subjugated* peoples. Spurred by Vietnam War and the Palestinian struggle, left-wing terrorist movements attacked American and Israeli interests across the world throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

The spread of diaspora populations across the globe, moreover, assisted in the propagation of violent ideologies and the global reach of terrorism. Support for the anarchist movement was greatly facilitated by the diffusion of Russian and Polish émigré populations to Europe and North America. Similarly Rapoport *fourth wave* of Islamist terror has energized émigré populations in Europe to fight foreign occupiers of subjugated Muslim peoples in Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia and Chechnya. Belgian and French fighters have been in the vanguard of IS terror campaign in Europe designed to punish the West for its military retaliation against the caliphate.

Rapoport's theory argues that terror waves generally last for a generation.[15] The anarchist, anti-colonial, radical left and Islamist terror cycles he describes have a natural progression leading to their demise.

Rapoport argues that cycles end because forces (state resistance, generational change and political concessions) dissipate the wave's violent dynamism.

He does, however, qualify his analysis regarding the *fourth wave* of Islamist terror. Rapoport argues that the religious basis of the wave may prolong its longevity. This argument is echoed by other analysts. Bruce Hoffman, for example, argues the theological character of *sacred terror* insures its resilience.[16] Its martyrdom culture and glorification of jihad provides a powerful religious stimulus toward continued violence. Underscoring its significance Rapoport's analysis has been its springboard for other meta-theories.

Using his framework Jeffery Kaplan argues that a *fifth wave of terror* has mutated from previous cycles.[17] Kaplan modifies Rapoport's argument that terror organizations can cross-navigate across the four waves. Pointing to the Khmer Rouge and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Kaplan argues these groups evolved from past waves into a new form of *tribal terrorism* not covered by Rapoport's classification scheme.

This new wave of terrorism is unique for its ideological extremism, group cohesiveness and brutal violence.[18] Separated from the world, these groups formed utopian microcommunities. Driving *fifth wave* terror is the group's messianic desire to destroy existing morality and eviscerate its underlying political-economic foundation. *Fifth wave* violence seeks to purify humanity of wickedness. Kaplan argues these totalitarian sentiments impel *fifth wave* groups to commit genocide and ethnic cleansing.[19]

Isolated in the jungle and dehumanized by war, the Cambodian communists developed their own millenarian cult committed to extremist violence and doctrinal purity.[20] The group's separatism from the world, Kaplan asserts, created a distinctive subculture that thrived on revenge and barbarism. The Khmer Rouge depopulated Phnom Penn, declared *Year Zero*, slaughtered the urban bourgeoisie, abolished paper money and its revolutionary committees regimented every aspect of peasant family life. Close to a million people were annihilated.

Based on a perverse reading of the Ten Commandments Joseph Kony's LRA created a warrior cult predicated upon rape, plunder and ethnic-tribal cleansing.[21] Composed of young males, the LRA is fanatically devoted to

its god-like leaders. Kony is viewed, by his drug-infected soldiers, as a leader predestined to create a new world from the ashes of past civilizations.

In his book *Tribalism and the New Terrorism* Kaplan entertains the prospect of an Islamist *fifth wave* but he discounts its development.[22] He argues that Islamist movement's international orientation blunts the autarkic development necessary to create the millenarian ideology that drives *fifth wave* hyper violence. Though he suggests that the Islamist Janjaweed has some *fifth wave* characteristics he argues that nonreligious forces (Arab racism and drought) drove their violent predatory activity.[23]

This perspective, however, underestimates Islam's apocalyptic tradition. Jean-Pierre Filiu and William McCants have persuasively argued that the fusion of jihad and millenarian ideology is an explosive combination.[24] Given the general absence of apocalyptic discourse in jihadist groups, IS's ideology has an unprecedented dynamic quality. This helps in explaining its unique capacity to recruit foreign fighters, divide the jihadist world and its ability to launch terror operations across the world.

Kaplan, moreover, overemphasizes the unifying vision of the caliphate in the Muslim world. Succession to the caliphate as often been contested and has involved blood power struggles. The history of jihadism, however, is replete with internal ideological and strategic divisions.[25] Driving many jihadists is a fanatical existential quest to create a modern version of Muhammad's seventh-century Medina community and reverse Islam's spiritual and political atrophy.

This implies an inherent psychological separation from the world for jihadists see Muslim society in a state of *jahiliyyah* or pre-Islamic ignorance.[26] Purging of *apostate* influences and the formation of experimental microcommunities has become a prime objective of the jihadist movement. Once purified and governed by Sharia law these idyllic communities through force expand their territorial control mimicking Muhammad's early successors. Despite their egalitarian pretentions, jihadists are elitists who seek to luxuriate in Muhammad's shadow and recreate a modern version of his embryonic Islamic State.[27]

The IS's idyllic vision of the Prophet's Medina was its Syrian redoubt Raqqa. Dislodging other rebel groups in 2013 ISI build a formidable

Islamist microcommunity around Raqqa.[28] It was a haven for its foreign fighters who lived in separate districts. The city featured Sharia courts, mandatory prayers, imposition of the veil, religious police and medieval punishments. Raqqa was the epicenter of Baghdadi's state and the blueprint to govern the entire caliphate.[29] Much of the caliphate's administrative and juridical rules and policies were developed in Raqqa. Governance in the city was the purest extension of the Islamic State's totalitarian vision. Its engagement of tribes, *dawa* missionary preaching, provision of *law* and *order*, and its charitable work sought to demonstrate its *idealistic* and *humane* side.

Like the Khmer Rouge IS is a youthful misogynistic movement committed to a new *heaven on earth* through the destruction of societal order. The caliphate youth camps hoped to indoctrinate future generations committed to its hyper violent utopian vision. IS's videos featured child executioners. Emblematic of its worldview was a video that used the Roman ruins of Palmyra as a background where teen boys slit the throats of bound Syrian soldiers.[30] This propaganda piece suggested that imperial glory awaits the *cubs* of the IS. The caliphate's partial destruction of Palmyra's pagan architecture suggested it had the capacity to shape the future by destroying the past.

The IS endorsed slavery of Yazidi women and slaughtered the polytheistic sect's populations in northern Iraq.[31] Its infatuation with sexual purity and traditional values forces women to wear the veil, confines their role to principally wives and mothers. The caliphate's all-female *Khansaa Brigade* zealously enforced IS puritanical vision in Raqqa's streets and online female recruiters actively court women to come to the caliphate to perform their *natural* biological and familial roles.[32] The caliphate has a family life manifesto that details the *appropriate* societal role of girls and women.[33]

The IS reflects doctrinal innovations made by jihadists for more than a generation. This book advances this argument in subsequent chapters. Building upon Rapoport's theory and Kaplan's concept of *tribal terror*, it argues that the IS constitutes an Islamist *fifth wave* movement. Its overall thesis links the progressive extremism of modern jihadism to the emergence of an Islamist *fifth wave* of terror incarnated by the IS. The argument is represented below.

Table I.1 The Book's Key Argument

Past failed	Jihadist frustration	Driven by	This extremism over
Islamist revolts to overthrow apostate regimes flummox jihadist strategists →	to achieve the desired Sharia state and resurrect the caliphate leads Islamist theoreticians to revise warfare doctrines and strategic objectives →	frustration strategists resort to more brutal forms of *warfare* >	time mutates into a *fifth wave* movement known as the Islamic State that paradoxically produces unprecedented division and support within the jihadist world

Chapter 1 is an overview of jihadist insurgency that flows through four stages: *mobilization, extremism, destruction* and *rebirth.* This cycle suggests a destructive yet resilient quality to Islamist insurrections that, while not successful, are difficult to repress. Depressingly it represents a pattern of permanent warfare driven by ideological fanaticism that, while doomed to fail, reappears. Table I.1 on the next page illustrates the book's main argument.

This ideological worldview is fleshed out in the book's second chapter that reviews jihadist thought and strategy. The core principles of the movement (al *wala wal bara, takfir* and *jihad*) are sketched. It argues that jihadist doctrine has evolved through sequential adaptations designed to avoid past failures and insure success. These innovations have resulted in progressively more brutal forms of warfare.

This extremism is exemplified in the IS's worldview. It carries forth this ultraviolent vision in ways that make traditional jihadists uncomfortable, representing a mutation that carries it into an Islamist *fifth wave* of terrorism.

Chapter 3 looks at the distinctiveness of the IS's vision and strategy and how it departs from the past jihadist strategies yet retains an Islamist caste. This may explain the controversies IS has generated within the jihadist movement. Though denounced by AQ, the IS's distinctive caliphate-centric strategy and apocalyptic sectarian ideology represents the movement's greatest achievement.

The book includes three case studies juxtaposing past jihadist movements with how the IS has redesigned the trajectory of Islamist warfare. These chapters are organized into three key sections. First, Islamist views of state and society are sketched. Second, the political and ideological trajectory of past jihadist revolts is analyzed. Third, how IS has recast jihadist insurgency in these societies is assessed.

Chapter 4 focuses on Syria and Iraq comparing past failed revolts with IS's development of a transnational state. Baghdadi hoped to create an *authentic* Islamic state in the Levant that emulated the rule of Muhammad's early successors.[34] Much of the international community campaign to *degrade* and *destroy* the IS was fought in this territory.

IS's development of regional affiliates is a critical feature in its *remaining* and *expanding* strategy.[35] Chapter 5 analyzes Egypt and Libya and how ISI provincial development has altered the jihadist struggle. Today Egypt's *Wilayat Sinai* is among the caliphate's strongest branches and until 2016 its provinces in Libya did achieve some governmental structures.[36] The IS's growth in Egypt and Libya gave the jihadist insurgency a dynamic robust quality missing from past insurgencies. IS-Libya's external operations have launched attacks in Tunisia and inspired assault in Europe.

Mali and Nigeria form the sixth chapter's case studies. Both countries feature past failed Islamist insurgencies and this chapter assesses IS's capacity to transform the West African jihadist struggle. Boko Haram's March 2015 transformation into an IS wilayat [province] and its millenarian hyper violence is a critical focal point. Despite a sustained offensive by Pan African forces, IS's Nigerian operations continue their brutal operational tempo.[37] Given IS's efforts to expand its West African presence, the caliphate's capacity to replace AQ in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali and resuscitate a jihadist movement badly hurt by France's 2013 military intervention is evaluated.

Chapter 7 examines the IS *war* against the West. It assesses the caliphate's campaign to *direct* and *inspire* its supporters to attack the Europe and North America. The destruction of the caliphate by the international coalition could trigger the return of thousands of Western foreign fighters igniting a terror wave across Europe for years.

Chapter 8 makes six central conclusions about the jihadist movement and its war against the world. Collectively they suggest a permanent cycle of warfare where progressively more radical jihadi movements arise and wage a resilient, if unsuccessful, war against their adversaries. The *Long War* may be a permanent conflict where the West must learn to be patient, resilient and ruthless when combating the jihadist menace.

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Chapter 1

Jihadist Insurgency

Failure and Destruction Breed Regeneration

Islamic extremism and failure have a long history. Ephraim Karsh argues that the illusive search for Islamic unity has been compromised by ideological and ethno-sectarian tensions.[1] Even in Islam's embryonic development intra-faith violence, assassinations and civil wars were common. When waging war against *apostate* regimes, jihadist violence against coreligionists often produces alienation and organizational fractures. Some analysts argue jihadist violence against fellow Muslims produces self-destructive tendencies for it invites external resistance and internal fragmentation.[2]

Jihadist implosion has been documented by West Point's pioneering work *Combating Terrorism Center*. Nelly Lahoud's book *The Jihadis' Path to Self-Destruction,* for example, compares modern jihadists to the seventh-century Kharijites.[3] Like their medieval predecessors jihadists desire a purer form of Islam achieved through violent action.

Though the Kharijites rejected the early caliphs venerated by today's jihadists these two groups share common ideals and methods. Central to Lahoud's comparison is the doctrine of *wala' al bara min'*—association and disassociation—practiced by the Kharijites and jihadists.[4] Their desire to associate with *true believers* requires their disassociation from *apostates* and it impels their eradication of *nonbelievers*. Given Islamic prohibitions against murdering coreligionists, killing *apostates* requires the use of *takfir* or excommunication against adversaries. Only by cleansing the *umma* [community] of impurity can jihadist demonstrate their loyalty to God alone and advance the cause of *tawid* [unity].

Under Sunni interpretations *takfir* and *defensive jihad* are highly individualized, lacking any clerical or state control to guide warfare.[5] This individualization invites dysfunctional leadership, tactical and ideological rivalries between jihadists. Once extremists appropriate the moral authority to determine who is a Muslim and what constitutes a pure Islamic order, they generate intra-movement disintegration.[6] By the end of the seventh century the Kharijites were so weakened by internal fissures and they were easily eradicated by their enemies. Today the Kharijites have a pejorative connotation and jihadists disassociate from this medieval movement.

Centrifugal pressures have haunted past jihadist movements. Brian Fishman and Assaf Moghadam argue many factors produce dysfunction and decline in jihadist movements.[7] Jihadists historically have quarreled over *who to target* (near or far enemy), *who to excommunicate* (Sunni apostates or Shia heretics) and *how to wage jihad* (achieving ideological purity versus exercising tactical pragmatism). Aggravating these inner conflicts are ethnic divisions and personal rivalries. The IS's AQI/ISI precursors were plagued by disintegrative pressures.[8] Indeed, the organization's brutality against Sunni tribes led to its near defeat by American forces and their Sons of Iraq Awakening allies.

These forces conjoin to produce organizational mutations and ideological complexity in the jihadist movement. Thomas Hegghammer argues that jihadi organizational strains in the post-9/11 era led many groups to fracture, recombine and recalibrate their ideological messaging.[9] Faced with numerous enemies, compromised by state counterterror operations and recruitment problems, jihadists shift tactics, reorient targeting priorities and vary their ideological appeals. Increasingly jihads are *hybrid* blurring enemy hierarchies with varying inconsistent tactics, programs and propaganda appeals.

AQ's post 9/11 devolution is an illustrative case study of organizational fragmentation and hybridization.[10] Once a hierarchical group dominated by a charismatic emir and committees that dictated external operations, finance, membership recruitment and propaganda, AQ has mutated into a decentralized fractured network. With its command and control shattered by US counterterror operations in the post-9/11 era, the network has found it difficult to direct regional affiliates. In their Abbottabad correspondence

AQ's central commanders lament the role of their affiliates' takfirist practices, their sectarian orientation and their *near enemy* fixation.[11] Today AQ's *far enemy* strategy of attacking Western interests has nearly collapsed. Despite the weakness of its centralized command and failure of its historic message, the network survives and endures.[12] It has mutated in directions that are anathema to AQ's original agenda, underscored by the network's expulsion of its Iraqi affiliate (now the Islamic State) in February 2014, for its failure to disengage from its Syrian operations and the order, reflects Zawahiri's rejection of ISI's sectarian strategy.[13]

Historically, jihadist frustration and failure has led to more takfirist and violent ideas. Jihadist theoreticians refine past doctrines to capitalize on opportunities and develop innovative ideas to attract recruits.[14] Progressively this has featured *hybrid* enemy hierarchies, elastic takfirist orientations, increasing brutality and a more merciless attitude toward opponents. Jihadist enlargement of enemies could be the consequence of past failure and a tendency toward conspiratorial explanations for past defeats. Abu Bakr Naji and Abu Mus'ab al-Suri explain the apostate regime's longevity as a consequence of *Zionist-Crusader* support requiring multiple wars and more brutality.[15] Frustration over not toppling apostate regimes contributes to greater violence as each jihadist seeks to develop the right means to secure power. The IS may represent the crest of this expansive takfirist wave that has been developing since the Afghan jihad.

Ideological and organizational pressures, furthermore, contribute to religious zealotry, frustration and paranoia, which lead to greater brutality in targeting civilians and religious minorities. Each successive jihadist movement seeks to fulfill a *divine role* to defend Islam's honor and advance its predestined conquest. Failure leads to frustration, which in turn makes jihadists more committed to achieve their agenda by any means. This may explain the resilience of the jihadist wave of terror that has lasted for more than a generation and shows little sign of abatement.

Fishman and Moghadam, paradoxically, note that jihadi divisions and failures have had little impact on the jihadist movement durability.[16] Extremist intellectual currents that give jihadism its ideological inspiration have deepened across the Muslim world. The cause of Islamic extremism continues to exert profound resonance among radicalized minorities of

Muslims. By some measures jihadism may be at the apex of its historic development.

EXTREMISM, FAILURE AND REGENERATION AS AN INTEGRATED CYCLE

The jihadism's resilience may be a consequence of a *creation, destruction* and *recreation cycle*. The fanatical need jihadists have to restore the caliphate and fulfill their *predestined* role as Allah's *divine agents* augers permanent war where extremist movements fail, yet endure. It speaks volumes about the intoxicating power of utopian ideas that have inspired violent totalitarian movements.[17] Each failure breeds more irrational movements which driven by a messianic desire to succeed require progressively higher levels of violence to achieve their vision. The IS has been frequently described as an *apocalyptic death cult* and its ultra-takfirist sectarian ideology is far more extreme than its AQ progenitor.

Its evolution involves a cycle of jihadist warfare composed of four parts: *mobilization, extremism, destruction* and *rebirth*. Each phase involves a sequence of events that characterize jihadist insurgencies. The cycle is easily discernible. After an initial burst of organizational dynamism and mobilization, jihadist movements employ extreme levels of violence to satisfy their millenarian ambitions.

The ideological extremism prompts internal divisions, popular revulsion and galvanizes opponents. This juxtaposition of forces leads to jihadist failure and a frequent inability to sustain a viable Islamic state.

The Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and AQI, for example, suffered severe reversals at the hands of security forces and local militias. The same extremist visions that led to its destruction, however, contribute to the group's regeneration. Examples will be explored in the book's case studies on Iraq and Syria (chapter 4), Egypt and Libya (chapter 5), and Nigeria and Mali (chapter 6). What follows is a brief explication of each of the cycle's phases.

JIHADIST MOBILIZATION

Waves of jihadist violence are often triggered by *catalytic events* like the USSR's occupation of Afghanistan, the US invasion of Iraq or the Algerian government's suspension of the 1991 Islamist election victory. Provocations by foreign governments or native regimes create a fertile climate for jihadist growth. Jihadi movements can also be ignited by political transformations. The Arab Spring, for example, resulted in regime turnover and turbulent transitions that created opportunities for jihadist forces.

M*ujahidin organizations* hope to exploit religious passions and fortuitous political circumstances. This provides opportunities to kill *apostate* regime supporters or attack occupying foreign forces. Incipient guerrilla insurgency creates a *dynamic of organizational growth* resulting in the recruitment of fighters.

JIHADIST EXTREMISM

Mujahidin forces often respond brutally to local resistance. Since Islam forbids intra-Muslim violence, jihadist groups employ *takfirist* measures. By branding coreligionists as *apostates*, jihadist forces have license to kill their Muslim adversaries. This frequently results in the massacre of women, children and targeting of religious minorities like Shi'ites, Sufis and Druze.

When Islamic revolutionaries seize territory abandoned by the regime, they aspire to lay governance. Jihadist *implementation of Sharia law* often takes on an ultra-fundamentalist caste. Opposition is ruthlessly swept away. *Local leaders are killed, women are subjugated* and *religious and ethnic minorities are persecuted*. Revenge killings and religious punishments [*hudud*] are employed to preserve order. Wartime conditions and security imperatives are used to justify such extreme behavior.

JIHADIST DESTRUCTION

During the initial stages of an insurgent campaign jihadist *mobilization* often results in terrible excesses. The ideological zeal to destroy *apostate* forces, wartime exigencies and the creation of Islamist enclaves where rebels displace government forces can *alienate the local population and generate external enemies*. Jihadists' maximalist agenda and use of takfir can contribute to *internal fracturing within jihadist ranks.*

Organizational fissures increase as *enemy forces rally and local groups resist* Islamist designs. Takfirist doctrine branding all non-supporters as *apostates* drastically *enlarges the number of enemies* assisting the regime's counterinsurgency efforts. During the Algerian Civil War and post-Saddam Iraq jihadist campaigns lost momentum due to internal splits, local resistance and regime countermeasures.[18] Governments opposed to Islamist rebels were able to use anti-jihadist militias to maximum effect.

JIHADIST REBIRTH AND A NEW CYCLE BEGINS

Declining popular support for the Iraqi and Algerian insurgencies and the failure of Islamist revolutionaries inspired internal debates within AQ's hierarchy. After the 2011 killing of bin Laden in his Abbottabad compound US forces seized AQ correspondence that expressed reservations about the behavior of its affiliates. Zarqawi's Iraq campaign is repeatedly criticized for its sectarian agenda and killing of Muslims.[19]

Bin Laden lamented the *near enemy* focus of his affiliates and urged them to target the United States, perform acts of charity and end their insurgency against Muslim governments. The emirs of AQIM, AQI, AQAP and Al Shabaab were chastised by bin Laden and deputy leader Abu Yahyah al-Libi for their *improper* execution of jihad. Prior to his death the historic leader hoped to centralize media operations and achieve strategic control over the terror organizations' diffuse and fragmented network.

AQ's advice to its regional emirs had little impact. They retained their *near enemy* focus, takfirist principles and sectarian agendas. This is true of AQIM, in the Sahel after Qaddafi's overthrow in 2011 (chapter 6) and the rebranded ISIS after the 2011 US withdrawal (chapter 4). Both groups were *rejuvenated by the Arab Spring turmoil* whose instability has given them a strategic opening to wage jihad. Unsurprisingly neither altered their ultraviolent sectarian strategy. Ideology appears to be a driving force. The desire for an *authentic* Islamic state has repeatedly trumped pragmatic impulses.

TAKFIRISM, VIOLENCE AND JIHADIST STATE-BUILDING

Jihadi emirates are rare developments, for most Islamist insurgences fail before reaching the state-building stage. The lack of popular support, intraorganizational divisions and local resistance are generally strong enough to defeat extremists. Failed jihadist insurrections in Egypt and the Maghreb in the 1990s are testimony to the movement's inability to seize and control territory. The GIA was unable to develop strong state-building capacity. Its draconian imposition of Sharia, in the limited areas it governed, inspired significant local resistance. Despite the organization's attacks in France in 1994–1995 it did not warrant Gallic military intervention for the Algerian state was sufficiently strong to repress the group.

Not all extremist violence, however, is dysfunctional. Brutality can be functional in the short term. In some circumstances it can delay the process of jihadist destruction. Savagery can assist jihadist's ability to capture and consolidate power. The unique conditions associated with jihadist's success in building a nascent revolutionary state are not well understood. While the dysfunctional effects of jihadist brutality are well documented, its opposite corollary has not been investigated.[20]

The effectiveness of jihadist barbarism is exemplified by the IS's 2014 seizure of Western Iraq and by the Taliban's 1990 extremist state. In these cases state collapse created a security vacuum assisting jihadist success. The religious zealotry of mujahidin warriors, moreover, drove advancement on the battlefield. Once seizing power, jihadi savagery facilitated state-building and consolidation. Massacres of prisoners, brutal Sharia rule and extreme violence intimated local and regional actors. With no major power blocking their seizure of territory, jihadists had significant latitude to begin their state-building project.

Collapsed states, weak opponents and the reticence of major powers to intercede facilitated the Taliban and the Islamic State's rise to power. Reinforced by tribal and sectarian identity, their takfirism proved unifying rather than divisive and the hyper violence it generated became a catalytic force for cohesion. The Taliban's Pashtun Deobandi fundamentalism and the IS created a takfirist identity hostile to many groups.[21] Driven by a sectarian animus against polytheism, jihadists destroyed ancient temples and committed massacres against religious minorities. The Taliban and IS'

morality police and Sharia courts imposed medieval punishments. With its sanctuary granted to AQ, the Taliban became embroiled in international jihadist cause.

By 2000 the Taliban brutally consolidated power over 90 percent of the country.[22] Its massacre of the Shia Hazara, brutal treatment of women and homosexuals, and high-profile destruction of the Buddhist Bamiyan shrine gained the Taliban international infamy. The Afghan Taliban successfully resisted containment by the international community, shielding AQ until the US military response after the 9/11 strikes.[23] Had it not been for its fatal association with AQ, the Taliban's state may have endured.

Despite their tribal identity, the Taliban were not isolationist. Internally conflicted over AQ's presence, they still resisted every international effort to extradite bin Laden. Even after AQ's attacks against American interests in Africa and Yemen, the Taliban shielded bin Laden's network. Reinforcing these global jihadi connections were the Taliban's association with the transnational Haqqani criminal-jihadi network. The tight organizational and ideological connections between AQ, the Haqqani's network and the Taliban persist.[24]

The extremist violence, so effective, in quelling local opponents, however, antagonizes international actors. Jihadist international agendas create countervailing external forces that facilitate jihadist state destruction. The Taliban's strategic relationship with AQ generated damaging ramifications. As Michel W. S. Ryan observes revolutionary jihadist states create the seeds for their destruction because their international aspirations invite external retaliation.[25]

Having eclipsed AQ in the development of a transnational jihadist state, the IS declared war against Muslim *apostates* and Western *infidels*. IS ideological messaging suggests an apocalyptic conflict ending with the complete destruction of its enemies.[26] Despite its reluctance to militarily intervene against the IS, the West was forced to do so. By August 2014 a coalition of sixty nations contributed to a military effort to assist the Iraqi government's fight against the Islamic State.

Once formed jihadi states have an expansive dynamic that invariably produce their demise. They delay but do not prevent the cycle's maturation. We will see this process play out in chapter 4 with the demise of the IS's

governance project in Syria and Iraq and in chapter 6 with the destruction of AQIM's jihadi emirate in Mali. The extremist behavior of these states invited international military intervention that toppled them.

JIHADIST STATE-BUILDING AND INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

State-building's centrality in jihadist theory is little contested. The conflict between AQ and the IS centers on the legitimacy of Abu Bakr's caliphate proclamation. Seen as the model for the IS's governance project, AQ ideologue Abu Bakr Naji's *Management of Savagery* outlines the conditions for a jihadist seizure of territory.[27] Based on Maoist guerrilla tactics, jihadists seize territory and move progressively to destroy the *apostate* forces. Its rule in the areas it governs is brutal, for war conditions necessitate ruthlessness to insure the jihadist project's viability. Naji envisions multiple insurgencies across the Muslim world as a crucial step to defeat the *Zionist-Crusader* order.

Naji advocates a revolutionary state to lead a global jihad against the West. Its international agenda aspire global Islamic conquest. Once established jihadist states are innately expansive for their religious zealotry will and for their violent international agenda. Naji's *Management of Savagery* represents radical currents that have been building for a generation. The dynamic behind this development is explored in the next chapter.

NOTES

1. Ephraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

2. Assaf Moghadam and Brian Fishman (eds), *Self-Inflicted Wounds: Debates and Divisions Within Al Qa'ida and the Periphery* (West Point: Combating Terrorism Center, 2012); Nelly Lahoud, *Jhadis Path to Self-Destruction* (London: C Hurst and Company, 2010); Michael W. S. Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda's Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2013).

3. Lahoud, ibid.

4. Ibid, 198–199.

5. Ibid, 14–15, 129–130, 181–182.

6. Ibid, 57–94.

7. Moghadam and Fishman, ibid.

8. Brian Fishman, *Dysfunction and Decline: Lessons Learned from Inside Al Qaeda in Iraq* (West Point: Combating Terrorism Center, 2009).

9. Thomas Hegghammer, "The Ideological Hybridization of Jihadi Groups" *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology 9* (November 18, 2009).

10. Anthony Celso, *Al Qaeda's Post 9–11 Devolution: The Failed Jihadist War on the Near and Far Enemy* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014).

11. Nelly Lahoud, Stuart Caudill, Liam Collins, Gabriel Koehler-Derrick, Don Rassler and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, *Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Laden Sidelined?* (West Point: Combating Terrorism Center, 2012).

12. Donald Holbrook, *The Al-Qaeda Doctrine: The Framing and Evolution of the Leadership's Public Discourse* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

13. Thomas Jocelyn (2014a) "Al Qaeda General Command Disowns Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham" *Long War Journal* February 3, 2014, accessed at http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/02/al_qaedas_general_cp.php.

14. Ryan, ibid; Holbrook, ibid.

15. Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al-Qaeda Strategist Abu Mus'ab Al-Suri* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Abu Bakr Naji, *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Phase Through Which the Umma Will Pass* (Cambridge: John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, 2006).

16. Moghadam and Fishman, ibid.

17. Paul Berman, *Terrorism and Liberalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004).

18. Luis Martinez, *The Algerian Civil War, 1990–1998* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000) ibid; Bing West, *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics and the Endgame in Iraq* (New York: Random House, 2009).

19. Lahoud et al., ibid.

20. William McCants (2015) "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Soccer Became Leader of the Islamic State" *Brookings Essay* September 1, 2015, accessed at http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2015/thebeliever.htm.

21. Anthony Celso, "Cycles of Jihadist Movements and the Role of Irrationality" **Orbis** 58:2, 229–247.

22. Ahmed Rashid, *The Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

23. Ibid.

24. Don Rassier and Vahid Brown, *The Haqqani Network and the Evolution of al-Qa'ida* (West Point: Combating Terrorism Center, 2011).

25. Ryan, ibid, 255–256.

26. William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016).

27. Naji, ibid.

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Chapter 2

Islamic Regression, Jihadist Frustration, and Takfirist Hyper Violence

Islamic civilization's regression after Europe's Enlightenment contradicted Muslim religious prophesies. *Sunna* and *hadith* of the Prophet's reported words and actions imply Islamic conquest of the planet.[1] Islam's early Mideast, North African, European and Central Asian conquests and its advancements in arts, sciences, math and philosophy reinforced these eschatological beliefs. Starting in the seventeenth century Islamic civilization, however, stagnated. There are contrasting explanations for this loss of dynamism.[2] These debates frequently centered on the Ottoman Empire's erosion.

Bernard Lewis argues Islam's acculturation of external influences was critical to its expansionism and its subsequent descent was due to its rejection of cross-civilizational contacts.[3] The Ottoman's failure to conquer Vienna in the seventeenth century exemplified their decay, reinforced by Russia's conquest, of its Central Asian territories decades later. Napoleon's Egypt campaign, a century later, solidified Ottoman decline. Countering defeats by European powers, the Ottomans westernized.

Europeanization did not reverse Ottoman atrophy. World War I led to the Empire's defeat and European colonization of its North African and Mideast territories. Faced with foreign occupation, nationalist secular movements gained ground. The Turkish nationalists served as an aspirational model for these movements. Creating a secular Turkey Kemal Ataturk in 1924 abolished the caliphate. The Ottomans ignominious fate gave rise to contradictory reactions.

Frustration over the *umma*'s [community] erosion contributed to Islamic revivalist movements.[4] Fundamentalist groups in Egypt and Pakistan aimed to restore Muslim civilization's lost promise by fortifying Sharia. They believed Islam's decline was due to *deviant* foreign values and practices. Muslim revivalists attributed Ottoman collapse to *Westernization*. They viewed Muhammad's Medina community and his four *righteous* successors' rule as congruent with Islam's *divine* trajectory. Early Islamic civilization's fidelity to Quranic principles, accordingly, was consistent with Allah's *divine plan* for humanity guaranteeing universal social justice and prosperity.

Brotherhood ideologues urged the restoration of medieval religious values to spur the faith's renewal. The movement expanded rapidly across the Muslim world and steadily gained ground as secular Pan Arab nationalism faltered.[5]

Islamist movements aspired to capture political power. They believed Sharia's imposition would avenge Islam's past humiliation and restore its predestined future. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) employed various methods to seize state power. The 1949 assassination of MB's founder Hassan al-Banna and the imprisonment of thousands of its members inspired wholesale resistance. The Brotherhood responded to state repression by resorting to violence and terror. During the 1960s Sayyid Qutb's reformulation of the Brotherhood's ideology catalyzed the movement's radicalization.[6] His vision of totalitarian Islamist society has tantalized a generation of jihadists.

Inspired by Qutb's ideas jihadist fervor and resilience are difficult to combat. Jihadism evokes a brutal fanaticism. Jihadists seeks Allah's blessing and proudly await their anointment to walk in his shadow. This vision propels them exciting their imagination. Modern jihadism has become more *takfirist, violent* and *sectarian.* Frustrated by their inability to seize power, jihadist strategies have employed increasing brutality.

Jihadist violence also prompts intra-movement divisions. While some extremists have recanted violence most intensified their savage tactics.[7] Jihadist *takiris* wage insurgencies against multiple enemies. Intra-jihadi conflict, moreover, invite more savage tactics to quell internal dissent. Historical and religious forces reinforce those jihadists advocating takfirist

violence. Islam's prophesied potential and its degenerative state furthermore unleash frustration inviting more savagery.

The Afghan jihad, the Iranian Revolution and the Grand Mosque of Mecca seizure by a millenarian cult contributed to the movement's sectarian, takfirist and apocalyptic evolution. These events of historic coalescence reinforced Islamic eschatological beliefs that intra-Islamic conflict [*fitna*] is a sign of impending apocalyptic war. These forces, however, did not mature until the IS's emergence.

This chapter examines jihadism's radicalized evolution in three stages. First, it discusses its takfirist political and religious foundations. Second, it analyses specific intra-jihadi debates that propelled more extremist visions. Third, it examines the social and political forces contributing to this ideological trajectory. The chapter concludes the IS's takfirist, apocalyptic vision and caliphate centric strategy reflects these trends. Like the plan developed by AQ theorist Saif al-Adel the IS envisages a doctrine of *total war* that annihilates *near*, *far* and *sectarian* enemies.

THE JIHADI-TAKFIRIST WORLDVIEW

Religious extremism plays a decisive role in jihadism's radical evolution. It contributes to the movement's adoption of a hyper violent worldview. A *Weltanschauung*fuses three concepts (*al-wala*, *wal-bara'*, *takfir* and *jihad*) that have intensified over time. Under IS's reformulation this tripart foundation has never been more extremist. Jihadism's evolution reflects an elitist violence driven by frustration, intra-jihadi conflicts and religious zeal.[8] These forces act synergistically. The chart (Table 2.1 on the next page) conceptualizes how this frustration has led to more extremist violence and intra-jihadi divisions. It is followed by a distillation of the tripartite foundations of jihadi ideology.

Table 2.1 Jihadist Frustration, Extremism and Intra-Movement Divisions

Past failed Islamist revolts against *apostate* regimes flummox jihadist strategists →	Jihadist *frustration* to achieve the desired Sharia state and resurrect the caliphate leads Islamist theoreticians to revise warfare doctrines and strategic objectives often toward more extreme solutions →	Driven by frustration strategists resort to more brutal forms of warfare and ideological *extremism* leading to radical interpretations of *al-wala, wal-bara, jihad* and *takfir* →	This *extremism* mutated into the Islamic State worldview that while resulting in a *caliphate* paradoxically produced unprecedented *division* within the jihadist world. Hence IS's break from Al Qaeda

Al-wala' and *wal-bara'* separates a community of believers from nonbelievers.[9] It speaks to a community [*umma*] governed by a shared faith that dissociates from others. The doctrine delineates a world of virtuous belief and an outside order governed by wickedness. It seeks to create a community congruent with early Islamic practice whose virtuous ideal is Muhammad's Medina community.

By constructing a spiritual refuge separated from *apostasy*, jihadists aspire to expand their microcommunity through preaching, war and conquest. As Nelly Lahoud notes *al-wala', wal-bara'* is a key principle of the jihadist movement.[10] It is, moreover, an *individualized* concept for each jihadist determines the community's standards. Given such variances, internal conflict arises.

Al-wala', wal-bara's propensity for violence is rooted in early Islamic history. The *Kharijites* were so wedded to Muhammad's Medina ideal that they rebelled against his immediate successors for their Quranic deviations.[11] Their desire to create an ideal microculture led them to expel those whose faith they questioned. Early Islamic rule was convulsed by internecine violence driven by doctrinal conflicts and power struggles.[12]

Al-wala', wal-bara' contributes to a takfirist worldview. Jihadists decouple from the world separating good from evil. This invites resistance against *apostate* forces. Since jihadists view Muslim society as stricken by post-Islamic ignorance [jahiliyyah] most coreligionists are *apostates*.[13] Jihadists see these societies as gravely ill for they venerate man's law over

God's rightful sovereignty (*hakimiya*). Jihadists view societal ignorance as so pronounced that that missionary preaching [*da'wa*] has little resonance. With regimes so implacably vile, jihadists' only recourse is societal separation and rebellion.

If jihadists are to perform their *divinely mandated* mission to purify Islam they must resort to violence against regime supporters. Given theological prohibitions against murdering fellow Muslims, this requires coreligionists expiation from the faith. Historically, *takfir* was practiced selectively against impious individuals subject to clerical adjudication.[14]

Over time, however, jihadists expanded *takfir's* scope. Some expiations are political (regime officials and their supporters), others sectarian (Shi'ites, Alawites and Druze) and some reflect intra-jihadist quarrels. The latter is seen in the fighting between the IS and AQ.[15] Takfirists often refer Ibn Taymiyyah's medieval rulings on *apostate* Mongol Muslim rulers, Shi'ites, Alawites and Druze interpreting them broadly.[16] Abu Musab al-Zaraqwi, for example, expanded Taymiyyah's ruling that Shi'ite leaders should be killed into a sectarian genocidal campaign.[17]

Resorting to takfirist excommunication legitimates killing Muslims. By doing so jihadists defend *al-wala' wal-bara'* preserving its communal virtue. This requires a strategy of offensive warfare [*jihad*] to (1) ensure the *umma*'s protection and (2) expand the boundaries of its governance.

Jihad's meaning inspire controversy.[18] Multiple interpretations engender complex doctrinal and definitional debates. Historically, jihad involved personal struggle with one's faith [*greater jihad*] and defensive war [*lesser jihad*]. Modern jihadists have expanded it to include aggressive warfare against *apostates* and their *infidel* masters. It is a strategy of expansive war that seeks the annihilation of all *enemies*.

Jihadist doctrine aspires to create a pure Islamist microculture. Despite their opposition to the IS's *caliphate,* AQ ideologues envision an *emirate* to lead the global jihadist struggle. Abu Bakr Naji, for example, advocates creating a nascent jihadist state from disorder and upheaval.[19] Once implanted this microcommunity would serve as an insurrectionary jihadist vanguard to provoke regional destabilization.

Naji's book *Management of Savagery* is viewed as the IS's model for warfare and Sharia governance.[20] In its first issue of its English language

magazine *Dabiq* IS sketches Naji prescribed path to power falsely attributing these stages to AQI founder Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.[21] The IS sees its de facto administrative headquarters in Raqqa as new Medina and its caliphate's governing blueprint. According to Aymen Jawad al-Tamimi Raqqa's administrate and judicial rulings were extended throughout IS's Iraqi-Syrian *wilaya* [provinces].[22]

Al-wala', wal-bara', takfir and offensive *jihad* are core jihadist principles. They propel the movement into greater violence and savagery. Jihadism's *community of believers* is exclusively narrow. Having rejected the contemporary Muslim world, jihadists hope their violence against the *apostate* order will spur apathetic Muslim masses into supporting their movement.

One way to conceptualize the daunting obstacles facing a jihadist transformation of the Muslim world is to look at the deep chasm in doctrinal interpretations of *wala/bara, takfir* and *jihad* that exists between jihadists and mainstream Muslims. Table 2.2 (on the next page) summarizes these competing interpretations.

Table 2.2 Jihadist versus Mainstream Islamic Interpretations

Branch of Muslim Thought	*al-Wala wal-Bara*	*Takfir*	*Jihad*
Mainstream Islamic Interpretations based from traditional schools (i.e. Hanafi and Maliki) of Islamic Jurisprudence	*Community of believers* defined expansively to inhabit a variety of Muslim Sects including Sunni, Shia, Druze, Sufi and Alawi.	Excommunication of coreligionists is defined narrowly by Clerical authorities under strict guidelines. Confined almost exclusively to those individual Muslims whose impious behavior violates the core foundations of Islamic practice. Collective *takfir* toward minority interpretations of the faith is rejected.	Bi-furcated between *greater jihad* (internal struggle) and *lesser jihad* (holy war). Greater jihad predominates and lesser jihad is confined to defense of the Muslim peoples and territories from aggressor states. *Lesser jihad* can only be declared by state authorities.
Salafi-Jihadist Interpretations based on extremist interpretations of the Hanbali school) by Ibn Taymiyyah and Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab	The *community of believers* is defined narrowly and the chasm between *true* and *false* (apostate) Muslims is substantial. Mainstream Islam is stricken by *jahiliyyah* or ignorance of the faith that must be purged through violent struggle. Each jihadi defines his/her *community of believers.*	Defined expansively to those Muslims who are apostates or support apostate rulers. Some Sunni Salafi jihadists practice collective *takfir* expiating Muslim religious minorities from the faith. Each jihadi defines who is an apostate and who should be expelled.	*Greater jihad now redefined as holy war* that becomes a sixth pillar of the Muslim faith and an individual obligation to defend Islamic interests from external aggression. Defined expansively to include offensive jihad against Muslim apostate and all non-Muslim civilizations. Each jihadist determines the score of jihadist warfare.

Abu Mus'ab al-Suri believed that revolutionary success against *apostate* regimes and their Western patrons could inspire ordinary Muslims into armed revolt.[23] Only a few have heeded his call. Muslim majorities' failure

to revolt has produced jihadist alienation, frustration and violence. The dynamic produces a more exclusivist *community of believers*, broader takfirist doctrines and pitiless warfare. Intra-jihadist rivalries, competition and violence flow from this process. Jihadist individualism guarantees doctrinal disputes and brutal power struggles.

TAKFIRIST JIHADISM EVOLUTIONARY DYNAMIC

Historically jihadism's *takfirist* orientation has intensified. While the forces causing this development are complex, a few overlapping factors predominate. They contribute to the movement's centrifugal pressures inviting frustration leading to more *takfirism* and violence. Jihadist failure to achieve Islam's prophetic destiny, to avenge Muslim dishonor and to quell intra-movement conflict drives this frustration and violence. Fractures, disputes and savagery are inherent in the jihadist movement whose aspirational unity has proved illusory. Why is this?

First, the movement's individualism invites severe conflict. Its key foundations (*al-wala, wal-bara, jihad* and *takfir*) are individuated. As a profession of faith jihadists see their violence against nonbelievers as a moral obligation. Each is driven by an ethic to defend the faith's purity, avenge its shame and propel its expansion.

Nelly Lahoud argues the movement's individualism implies varying interpretations over the scope of *jihad, takfir* and communal association.[24] Though revered by today's jihadists, Muhammad's successors were repeatedly challenged by *Kharijite* revolts. Centuries later the *Assassins* murdered Muslim leaders whom they considered *apostates*.[25] Islam's mythological *golden age* was awash with blood, civil wars and succession disputes.

Second, creating a jihadist mass movement is difficult. With its doctrinal variances, disputes over tactics and leadership rivalries, building mass movements is problematic. Ephraim Karsh argues that the vision of an *umma* led by a single political authority has disintegrated when challenged by cultural, tribal and clan loyalties.[26]

Jihadists become frustrated with societal rejection. They retaliate against those whose interests they proclaim to defend. Modeled on Leninist democratic centralist principles, jihadism's elitist nature militates against

developing a mass movement. Donald Hancock notes that Osama bin Laden (OBL) and Ayman al-Zawahiri regularly chastised the “masses” for their apathy.[27] These recriminations are unsurprising, given jihadist views on *jahiliyyah* and communal ignorance. Their frustrations lead them to *takfirism*, brutality and internal conflicts.

Third, jihadism unsuccessfully navigates between Medina and Mecca’s competing historic poles. Considered by jihadists as *Allah will* incarnate recreating Muhammad’s Medina community is critical. It is that experience that intoxicates them for a new Medina’s perfection that is seen as the bedrock of a future revolutionary state. This vision inspires fervor and brutality.

AQIM’s savage rule in Timbuktu and the medieval brutality of IS’s Raqqa seem driven by visions of a *new Medina.* Sharia law is rigidly enforced in Raqqa as is *hudud* punishments. Stoning, amputations, crucifixion, flogging, summary executions and the destruction of religious iconography are almost daily rituals.

Other complications arise. Translating the new Medina’s purity into a revolutionary jihadist state has proved vexing. Faced with the complex tasks of military expansion and administration, jihadists are subsumed by doctrinal and tactical quarrels. The community loses its moralistic ethos and collective solidarity. Ideological disputes arise over how to challenge apostate practices and the depth of Sharia’s implementation. The ensuing violence breaks the *umma*’s solidarity.

The GIA behavior in the 1990s exemplified this dynamic.[28] The group’s ideological extremism and brutal Sharia imposition invited internal dissension and popular resistance. Both forces propelled the movement into disintegrating violence. Like the extremist Khmer Rouge GIA members soon turned their rage inward. The GIA’s inability to sustain Medina’s ideal led to frustration, aggression, conflict and disintegration.

The tension of harmonizing communal purity and furthering mass revolutionary development may account for jihadist extremism and infighting. Charles Lister argues that IS and AQ have competing models to lead the global jihadist movement. Seeking to monopolize control under its authority IS’s *ink spot* model seeks caliphal control over its outlying provinces while Al Qaeda’s insertion into the broader revolutionary

movement emphasizes consensus between different jihadist organizations.[29] IS-AQ ideological and military confrontations reflect their respective visions. This divergence produces internal disputes and intra-movement violence.

The IS and AQ rivalry reflects generational conflicts within the jihadist movement. The competition centers over how best to manage centrifugal pressures that have plagued modern jihadism. The IS-AQ divorce is the culmination of decades of jihadist doctrinal and ideological innovations. Successive jihadist theorists have modified past practices and created new strategies to rectify the *umma*'s degeneration and propel its predestined expansion. Past defeats of Islamic revolts fueled greater aggressiveness enlarging the scope of jihadist enemies. Since Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones* modern jihadism has evolved in hyper violent takfirist direction.

Began by Sayyid Qutb the movement's doctrinal evolution as modified by Muhammad abd al-Salam Faraj, Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, Abu Bakr Naji and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi have contributed to IS's apocalyptic, takfirist and sectarian worldview. It represents a dialectical process where jihadism's core foundations have radicalized. Cross-generational intra-jihadist criticism and revisionism has led to ideological extremism. This chapter fleshes out modern jihadism's takfirist progression. This progression has led to the development of a *total war doctrine* that blurs the divide between the internal *near enemy* and the external *far enemy.*

JIHADIST DIALECTICS: FROM QUTB TO ZARQAWI

Historically jihadist debates have been animated by two questions. First, *what* or *who* has caused Islam's atrophy? Second, *how* do Muslims *overcome* this state of regression to fulfill Islam's prophetic dominance? Jihadist theorists aspire to answer these questions.

Jihadism has demonized and enlarged those *culpable* and prescribed more drastic solutions to propel Islam's *purification* and advancement. The missionary *dawa* preaching of Sayyid Qutb has given way to Abu Musab al-Zaraqwi's and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's sectarian slaughters. This radicalization process is unearthed by exploring four doctrinal refinements. These are (1) Muhammad abd al-Salam Faraj's modification of Sayyid

Qub's concept of jihadist struggle, (2) Bin Laden's reorientation of Abdullah Azzam's jihadist warfare doctrine, (3) Abu Mus'ab Suri and Abu Bakr Naji's post 9/11 insurgency strategies and (4) the doctrinal disputes between Ayman al-Zawahiri and IS's ideological progenitor Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

QUTB AND FARAJ

Qutb's importance for modern jihadist theorists is widely acknowledged. His *Milestones* is unequaled in its rejection of foreign cultural influence and its exaltation of a mythic Islamic past. Inspired by Hassan al-Banna critique of Western influence, Qutb joined the Egyptian MB and played a formidable role in the party's ideological development. Qutb's ideas paved the way for the Brotherhood's most aggressive opponents who rejected their 1970s policy of accommodation to the Egyptian state. One notorious acolyte Ayman al-Zawahiri saw the Brotherhood's informal deals with the Sadat and Mubarak regimes as a betrayal of Qutbian principles.

Qutb argued that European influence produced ignorance (*jahiliyyah*) of Allah's will.[30] He believed that this ignorance was abetted by Muslim *apostate* rulers and religious revisionists who aspired to make Islam congruent with modern (Western) society. Qutb argued that no genuine Islamic society could exist without Sharia law. He was especially critical of the traditional clergy of Al Azhar University who he viewed as providing religious sanction for impious rulers.

Qutb argued Nasser's secularization policies denied Muslims the fulfillment of Allah's will that reached its zenith under Muhammad and his immediate successors. Because the seventh-century *umma* made no separation between politics and religion, any deviation from Muhammad's Medina model was to be rejected. By separating religion from the state, Qutb reasoned, Nasser and Ataturk were apostates complicit in Western efforts to destroy Islam. Under such circumstances, *jihad* against such rulers was a moral obligation.

Qutb argued that *jahiliyyah* was analogous to Muhammad's pre-Islamic era. Like the Prophet, Qutb believed this state *of ignorance* needed to be destroyed. Since *jahiliyyah* was so profound, Qutb thought only an enlightened few remained faithful to Allah's original vision. They, Qutb

argued, would lead an Islamic rebellion.[31] Qutb's vanguard would preach the *true message* and transform the society. Once Muslims restored traditional Islamic principles they would rebel against impious rulers.

This perspective espouses aggressive jihad that rejects confining religious struggle to private belief. Qutb's views espouse a totalistic Islam that fuses politics, personal morality and religion.[32] Its desired end states the restoration of God's sovereignty [*hakimiyya*] modeled upon Sharia law securing justice and divine order.

Qutb's evolution toward totalitarianism was not immediate. As John Calvert work speaks tellingly, Qutb emerged a radical as a result of thirty-year evolution from secular nationalist to jihadist totalitarian.[33] His imprisonment and torture by Nasser's regime radicalized him. Only late in life did Qutb see a Manichean world separated by Islamic purity and Satan. Between these two worlds there was no compromise.

Some suggest that Qutb's philosophy was nonviolent and that he sought revolutionary transformation through preaching to transcend *jahiliyyah.* [34] Under such an interpretation a missionizing revolutionary vanguard can convince ignorant masses to revolt against *apostate* rulers. Accordingly, violence could be limited against recalcitrant rulers once Muslims reconnected with their faith. The revolution need not be bloody.

While not doubting Qutb's sincerity, Calvert argues that he did support violent agitation. His organization of revolutionary cells resulted in his 1964 arrest. Like most totalitarians, Qutb's was convinced that moral suasion buttressed by violence could impel others toward a righteously path.

His ideas contributed to the spread of revolutionary jihadist groups in Egypt. One of his followers Muhammad abd al-Salam Faraj was a leader in *Islamic Jihad* hoped to expand upon his mentor's legacy.[35] Faraj's 1979 political tract *The Neglected Duty* elevated jihad to a central pillar of Islam and stressed attacking the *near* rather than the *far enemy*.[36]

Faraj argues that jihad was neglected because Egypt's clerical establishment legitimated the apostate regime. Its religious teachings, accordingly, emphasized deference toward rulers and aspired to make Islam apolitical. By rediscovering *jihad* as a personal moral duty, Faraj argued, Muslims could liberate society from *repressive* apostate rule. Under Faraj's

theories the struggle against the *near enemy* transcended the fight against the Zionist *far enemy.* Until *apostate* regimes were overthrown by Islamic revolutionaries, wars against Israel would likely fail. The restoration of God's sovereignty (*hakimiyya*) in Egypt would mobilize the *umma* into action against the Zionist state. The path to liberate Jerusalem accordingly lies through Cairo.

Unlike Qutb, Faraj believed in revolution from above. He critiqued the MB's *dawa* and charitable activities as ineffectual.[37] His engineering training made him contemptuous of religious scholars and quietist Salafists. The restoration of *jihad* as a central pillar in Muslim life and violence's utility permeate his philosophy. The destruction of *apostasy* requires immediate action. Only by organizing revolutionary cells and striking at the regime's leadership could the masses be roused into action.

Faraj's revolutionary cell organized the 1981 assassination of Egypt's president Anwar al-Sadat before a military parade celebrating Egypt's role in the 1973 war. Faraj hoped that Sadat's killing would impel the masses to revolt. *Islamic Jihad*'s assassination of Sadat in 1981 instead bred a brutal army crackdown that degraded the terror network. Unlike Qutb, Faraj did not see insurrection preconditioned upon society's voluntary religious transformation. Like his mentor he would be hanged. Had Faraj succeeded in toppling the regime his revolutionary state would likely be repressive.

AZZAM AND BIN LADEN

Inspired by Qutb's vision Abdullah Azzam, OBL and Ayman al-Zawahiri have reinterpreted his message. They reversed Qutb's order of conflict by targeting foreign powers, as a preceding step for a larger war against the Muslim apostates.[38] Their reinterpretation of Qutb is a consequence of Islamist failure to overthrow the apostate *near enemy*.[39]

Historically jihadist rebellions have faltered. The MB's failed insurrections in the 1950s and 1960s, the Assad regime's defeat of the 1980s Islamist revolt in Syria and the collapse of the Algerian and Libyan jihads in the late 1990s are testimony to jihadists inability to overthrow regimes. In the 1990s only in weak or nonexistent states like Afghanistan and the Sudan did Islamic militants seize power.

Wars against foreign powers, however, were viewed as a resounding success. The Afghan jihad effectiveness revised Qutb's revolutionary scheme. The Palestinian Abdullah Azzam preached that the *umma*'s defense against foreign aggression was an individual duty. Jihad he argued should be a pillar of Muslim life.[40] Its significance lies in private responsibility to wage *defensive* jihad. No state or official sanction was necessary to legitimate jihadist activity. The theory legitimated private organization and finance of jihadist forces.

With his religious studies doctorate and recruitment of Arab Afghans, Azzam fused jihadist thought with action. Aside from Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi he is an exceptional outlier among jihadists who lack formal religious training. Azzam's personal connections to bin Laden and Zawahiri during the Afghan jihad insured his significance.[41] The Palestinian argued that glory through combat against foreign aggressors was a precursor for martyrdom. Azzam lectures on jihad at Jeddah's King Abdulazziz University riveted bin Laden during his student days.

Bin Laden was recruited in Pakistan as part of Azzam's support network for Arab fighters resisting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. While Azzam's doctrine of resistance was defensive and centered against foreign occupiers of Muslim land, it was a stepping stone for more aggressive version of jihad.

Within this context, AQ was born. Azzam's advocacy of an International jihadist force to defend Muslim territory in Kashmir and Palestine offered these fighters an attractive opportunity. In *Defense of Muslim Lands* Azzam calls jihad a personal duty. His jihadist vision was innovative.[42] Classical jurists conceived jihad more as a collective duty by the Muslim umma (*Dar al Islam*) to violently engage foreigners in zones of inter-civilizational conflict (*Dar al Harb*).

Azzam's reimagining of *jihad* allowed for a private network to combat foreign aggression against *Allah's domain.* Under his vision, AQ (The Base) was formed in 1988 to train, recruit and send jihadists to liberate Muslim territory. The creation of an international network devoted to jihad was a godsend for radical Islamists seeking battlefield glory. Emboldened by the Afghan jihad's success, these militants hoped to achieve similar success in

Kashmir and Palestine.[43] Many sought assistance to wage jihad at home against *apostate* regimes.

Azzam's pivotal role in AQ's development didn't last. His ambiguous *defensive jihad* doctrine invites many interpretations. How might one define *Allah's domain* or the territorial reach of *Dar al Islam*? Historically, Islam stretched from Spain to Southeast Asia. Most of this territory is governed by what jihadists consider infidel regimes.

Bin Laden and Zawahiri wanted a more expansive warfare strategy that permitted insurrections against *apostate* Muslim regimes.[44] Their jihadist vision endorsed a *takfirist* struggle against the *near enemy*. Bin Laden-Zawahiri's version of jihad was unacceptable to Azzam who disliked intra-Muslim conflict.[45] Both wanted to expand jihad by taking the fight to America in retaliation for US Gulf policy and support for Israel.

This conflict led to a power struggle with bin Laden's achieving dominance over the organization. OBL's charisma and his fortune captured the attention of AQ's Shura advisory council that in August 1988 elected bin Laden as emir. The bin Laden and Azzam dispute invites controversy.[46] Bin Laden's break with his former mentor may have been driven by Zawahiri who coveted bin Laden's patronage to secure control over the fractured Egyptian jihadist movement. Lawrence Wright argues that Zawahiri's disputes with Azzam and his desire to exploit bin Laden's finances explain the breach.[47] After bin Laden was named emir, Azzam's role in AQ was marginal.

Under OBL and Zawahiri AQ trained groups were dispatched to multiple fronts. They organized committees governing military, media and financial affairs. AQ's expansive jihad included liberating Muslim territory from foreign aggression, fighting Muslim apostate regimes and attacking US interests.

Azzam's death in November 1989 accelerated AQ's maximalist trajectory.[48] His car bomb assassination outside a Pakistani mosque raised questions over who killed him and how his death impacted Al Qaeda's progression? Whether Osama was responsible or not, Azzam's assassination allowed AQ to pursue an expansive jihadist agenda targeting *near* and *far* enemies.

Based on late AQAP leader Nasir al-Wuhayshi's reminiscences bin Laden's pre-9/11 policy was driven by frustration over jihadist's failure to overthrow the *near enemy*.[49] According to Wuhayshi, bin Laden and Zawahiri reckoned that jihadist insurrection against *apostate* regimes produced divisions within the movement and that targeting America would catalyze unity. Accordingly AQ could capitalize upon widespread revulsion toward the United States for its Mideast policy.

OBL and Zawahiri believed America and Israel allied with Gulf Arab *apostate* regimes to control Mideast oil and destroy Islam. OBL viewed the 1991 Gulf War as establishing a US protectorate over Saudi Arabia. AQ's *far enemy* strategy broadened the jihadist struggle by targeting the US homeland. No longer would jihadists fight infidels only on threatened Muslim land but they would take the war to their territory. By attacking US interests across the world, AQ hoped to intimidate America and force its Mideast financial and military disengagement. Deprived of US support apostate regimes, they reckoned, would fall before Islamist revolutionary movements.

Under Taliban protection OBL and Zawahiri launched attacks against US interests in Saudi Arabia, Africa and Yemen. AQ's *Holy Tuesday* 9/11 attacks changed the jihadist dynamic. The New York and Washington attacks struck at the financial and military symbols of US power. Fawaz Gerges notes the 9/11 attacks were unpopular among some jihadists. By beginning a war with the United States, AQ brought unwarranted attention on the global jihadist movement. The US counterstrike against AQ's Taliban sanctuary shattered its hierarchical network and succeeded in destroying Mullah Omar's state. Deprived of state patronage AQ became a hunted, degraded and harassed organization. The subsequent *War on Terror* and open jihadist military fronts in Afghanistan and Iraq impelled further doctrinal reformulations.

SURI AND NAJI

Many studies assess AQ's post 9/11 strategy and operational capability.[50] The dispersion of networks has resulted in varying interpretations of AQ's potency. The search to define the AQ's post 9–11 strategy led many to the

work of Syrian jihadist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri. For some observers Suri is the architect of AQ's efforts to defeat the West after 9/11.[51]

His writings, lectures and video tapes dominate many jihadi websites. No other modern jihadist has written so clearly or extensively. Suri's 1,600-page book, *The Global Islamic Resistance Call,* is considered by many jihadists as the blueprint to defeat the West.[52] Suri was so influential at the time of his 2005 arrest in Pakistan, the FBI had assigned a five-million-dollars reward for information leading to his capture.

Suri's writings emphasize jihad through uncoordinated small groups attacking Western interests. AQ's dispersion seems consistent with *homegrown* terrorist theories popular in press and academic circles.[53] The rise of *homegrown* terrorism falsely attributed for the Madrid and London bombings no doubt attracted attention to Suri's ideas. Moreover, his analysis is based on activism in the Syrian, Algerian and Afghan jihads and decades of intellectual reflection.

His connection to AQ and other jihadist organizations, moreover, is uncontested. Suri was an important figure in AQ Spanish network. Having spent years living in Spain, he had strong relationship with the Spanish network's leader Abu Dadah who played a role in facilitating a 9/11 planning conference in Tarragona.[54] Suri was also a GIA and AQ media representative in London during the 1990s. Most famously he was the conduit for bin Laden's meeting with Peter Bergen in 1998 shortly after the African Embassy bombings and bin Laden's declaration of war against the United States.

Suri's loyalty to AQ, however, is suspect. During his Afghanistan years he clashed with bin Laden.[55] When he ran his own camp during the Taliban period, Suri did not swear *bay'ah* [fidelity] to bin Laden. Their contrasting personalities, furthermore, found bin Laden angered by Suri's volatility and brashness.

The Syrian criticized bin Laden when the Saudi leader refused to follow Taliban orders and moderate his attacks against US interests. Suri admired Mullah Omar and he managed the Taliban's propaganda operations. He viewed Taliban's state as ideal.

Suri was appalled by bin Laden's lack of respect for the Taliban and his unwillingness to coordinate policy with Omar's government. He, moreover,

criticized AQ's hierarchical structure which left it vulnerable to American military retaliation after 9/11. By his account, AQ lost 80 percent of its Afghan force after 9/11. AQ's vaunted Brigade 055 was decimated in the US retaliation.[56] His work is a devastating indictment of past jihadist organizations and strategies.

His *Global Islamic Resistance Call* warns that hierarchical jihadist organizations are vulnerable to police and military disruption. According to Suri the Syrian Brotherhood revolt at Hama in 1982 unwisely confronted the Syrian state allowing the Assad's regime to unleash its massive firepower. Suri is critical of Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) whose organization played a pivotal role in AQ's development. He describes the EIJ's terror campaign as a "total failure."[57] Having been a passionate supporter of the Algerian GIA he later condemned the group's extremist mistakes.

Instead of central direction Suri advocated *tanzim* or system and not organization.[58] Borrowing from Che Guevara's "el foco" theory, Suri's doctrine involves open fronts conducted by small, uncoordinated groups. Suri's decentralized jihadist insurgency has numerous advantages. Each cell's independence is less susceptible to government retaliation. Even if police and intelligence forces penetrate and destroy one cell its impact would be minimal on the revolutionary movement. Unable to effectively retaliate, the enemy would be drawn into multiple fronts characterized by repeated strikes by small groups. Michael W. S. Ryan argues that Suri's doctrine was influenced by Robert Taber's *War of the Flee* in its advocacy of decentralized guerrilla warfare.[59]

Suri expected that the US military would be unable to combat decentralized insurgencies whose exponential growth guaranteed victory. Defeated America would disengage from the Middle East leaving their *apostate* allies vulnerable to Islamist revolts.

Suri sees the United States exercising imperial control over the Middle East. He argues that the 1991 Gulf War was a ploy by the West to control Middle East oil and reinforce apostate rule. Anglo-American capitalism, moreover, culturally polluted Muslim society. Islam, he reckons, has a retributive right to attack the American homeland, kill its civilians, and employ mass casualty attacks.[60]

Suri advocates using weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to punish and terrorize the West. His strategy seeks the excitation of communitarian passions. Suri believed that American military campaigns in Islamic lands would unleash religious passions unifying the *umma*. Small bands would rise to fight American forces across the globe. Decentralized jihadist cells would harass Western forces and each violent encounter would inspire more combatants.

Suri's views over jihadist capacity to stir mass religious passions seem dependent upon mystical forces. These sentiments belie his reputation as a *realist* but it is typical of jihadist thinkers whose faith in *divine guidance* is unshakeable. They fervently believe that the slumbering *umma* can arise from its jahilli ignorance once witnessing heroic battlefield exploits and martyred jihadists.

Enraged by *jahilli* ignorance, Suri clings to takfirist ideas. He is reluctant to follow his doctrine's consequences. Indeed, his takfirist ideas impede mass mobilization for they reify vanguard elites committed to the *true path.* Invariably they retaliate against Muslims who oppose their elitist movement. Muslim majorities have not responded in sufficient numbers to evoke the transformation envisioned by Suri's book. By 2011 AQ was considered a *spent organization* whose leadership cadres, offensive capacity and leadership were degraded.

Tactically, Suri's decentralized jihad has limited utility. Composed of inexperienced amateurs small autonomous groups often fail. The damage small cells can do is limited and their ineffectiveness reduce jihadism's appeal. Mass excitation of jihadist passions, moreover, requires central direction. How else could *jahiliyyah* be transcended? Suri assumes that the internet and social media could stimulate the *umma*'s revolutionary awakening. Yet the *jihadesphere* is so immense, *so* fractured and so quarrelsome that such unity is unlikely. Only a strong bureaucratic entity could direct the masses in the desired direction.[61]

Suri is unlikely to have exerted influence on AQ post-9/11 strategy. Bin Laden disliked him and his outsider role limited his leverage within the network. Significantly, Suri's work has never been endorsed by AQ's central media operations. Near the end of his life bin Laden wanted to

centralize operations among AQ's regional franchises to ensure greater strategic direction.[62]

Suri's influence is trumped by Abu Bakr Naji whose e-treatise *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Phase in Which the Ummah Will Pass* has been endorsed by AQ media operations.[63] William McCants and Michael W. S. Ryan argue that IS's strategic direction is inspired by Naji's book.[64] Though falsely attributed to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, IS first issue of its *Dabiq* e-magazine, outlines Naji's stages of jihadist insurgency.[65]

Naji's e-treatise was published in 2004 by an AQ media outlet.[66] His *exhaustion and vexation strategy* is consistent with AQ's actual attacks in Europe and its assaults against coalition troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.[67] Naji advocates a campaign designed to weaken the West's resolve and force its Mideast disengagement. His goal is to cripple AQ's *far* and *near enemies*. Naji declares:

> The primary goal for the stage of the power of "vexation" and "exhaustion" is:
>
> 1. exhaust the forces of the enemy and the regimes collaborating with them, disperse their efforts, and working to make them unable to catch their breath by ways of operations of the choice states, primary or otherwise. Even if the operations are small in size and effect …
> 2. attract new youth to the jihadi work by undertaking qualitative operations … by qualitative operations … like the operations in Bali … and the large operations in Iraq.[68]

Naji emphasizes the targeting of civilians, transport infrastructure and economic institutions.[69] His strategy is driven by a desire to inflict immense damage upon the West and their *apostate* enemies. Mass casualty attacks are designed to sway public opinion and pressure Western policy-makers to end anti-terror measures. No type of attack is excluded and Naji prioritizes WMD attacks against civilians.

He endorses attacking any regime allied with Washington. Assaults against Muslim *apostate* governments are emphasized. Like Suri's *Global*

Resistance Call, Naji uses takfirist doctrine to justify brutal attacks against *impious* Muslims.

Naji argues that the USSR's collapse and the Cold War's end ushered forth American-Israeli imperial aggression against the Muslim world. He interprets the Gulf War as an insidious American bid to appropriate Muslim land and resources.[70] Continued American support for Israel and its policies in the occupied territories are offered as proof of a *Zionist-Crusader* conspiracy to destroy Islam and reinforce *apostate* rule. The Saudi monarchy is, accordingly, the handmaiden of American influence and power in the region.

The Management of Savagery advocates alliances with regional jihadist groups to "open fronts" across the Muslim world. Citing Paul Kennedy's work on imperial overextension, Naji believes American military forces can be drawn into multiple battle zones for they like the Russians in Afghanistan will suffer crippling losses.[71]

Naji believes jihadist attacks in North America and Europe could fracture international coalition's will to fight and sway public opinion against military intervention.[72] Naji's *vexation and exhaustion* doctrine emphasizes central direction of the mujahidin struggle against America for only one jihadist organization can coordinate a systematic global terror campaign.

Battlefield success, therefore, must be buttressed by a twofold propaganda strategy. First, depicting mujahidin victories against Western troops and strikes against the Western homeland weaken enemies and arouse Muslim passions to join jihadist forces. Second, it sways Western public opinion toward disengagement from Islamic battlefields. Operating from this premise IS's November 13, 2015, attacks in Paris were designed to pressure France to disengage military operations against its caliphate.[73] The IS celebrates its attacks against *apostates* and their infidel masters across multiple media forums.

Naji's strategy aspires to provoke regional disorder. Citing Taliban rule as a model, Naji expects that Islamic states will arise to *manage* anarchy.[74] He advocates stern measures for those who oppose these microstates. Naji references Muhammad's successor's warfare strategies to further these emirates. Commenting on the IS's caged immolation of a captured

Jordanian Air Force pilot, Fernando Reinares references Naji's support for Abu Bakr's use of fire against enemies.[75]

His war strategy seeks the caliphate's resurrection. Naji's *near* and *far enemy* merger advocates alliances with multiple networks. Against these enemies there can be no mercy. Naji speaks favorably of Egyptian *Islamic Jihad*'s targeting of the tourist industry and their crippling economic impact.[76]

Brynjar Lia's analysis of AQ post-9/11 media strategy provides further evidence that Naji's *vexation and exhaustion* strategy drives the terror network's behavior.[77] Lia argues that AQ propaganda emphasized striking the West and Muslim *apostate* regimes. AQ media outlets endorsed economic strikes, attacking civilians and brutalizing enemy troops. He argues that AQ's list of enemies has grown as has its support for expanded violence.[78] This conclusion reinforces Thomas Hegghammer who argues post-9/11 jihadists groups have *cross-hybridized*.[79] Lia's analysis can be extended to IS whose sectarian strategy is a pillar of its propaganda messaging. The caliphate's takfirist philosophy and barbarism is even more pronounced than its AQI progenitor.

ZAWAHIRI AND ZARQAWI

AQ's decision to use Iraqi Kurdistan as a rear operations base increased with America's war plans against Saddam Hussein's regime. During the late 1990s Abu Musab al-Zarqawi had built a financial and recruitment network with Kurdish Islamists in Iraq and Europe. The loss of the Taliban safe haven after 9/11, made Iraqi Kurdistan invaluable to AQ.

The US invasion dispatched Saddam's army prompting state implosion. With its small force, the US military struggled against multiple insurgent groups. Many former Iraqi soldiers joined the resistance after the American decision to disband the army.[80]

Zarqawi's group [*al-Tawid wal-Jihad*] centered its operations in Tikrit, Baghdad and Ramadi. Known as the *Sunni Triangle* the region became the resistance movement's epicenter. Zarqawi's network of foreign fighters, explosives factories, media operations and criminal activities involved over a thousand militants.[81] The group's effectiveness was magnified by its brutal violence and sophisticated media campaign. Zarqawi's smuggling of

foreign suicide bombers through Syrian networks unleashed brutal violence in Iraq.

His pre-2004 operations targeted US forces, foreign workers, Iraqi security services and construction projects. The Jordanians also struck at the Iraqi religious establishment. His 2003 Najaf bombing killed eighty people including Shi'ite cleric Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir-al-Hakim.[82] Zarqawi's network beheaded foreign workers, employed suicide bombers and improvised explosives against coalition and Iraqi forces.

His role in the insurgency was accentuated by his propaganda campaign glorifying his network's jihadist exploits. Capitalizing on new communications technology Zarqawi posted videos of suicide bombings, grotesque beheadings and attacks on coalition forces, and he used the internet to collect funds and recruit foreign fighters. As a consequence, Zarqawi contributed to the emergence of a virtual *jihadesphere* linking internet videos, chat rooms, Facebook and YouTube activity.[83] His e-magazine *The Camel's Hump* trumpeted his networks exploits, published information on car bomb making, IED fabrications and insurgent guerilla tactics.[84] He provided the model that guides IS more robust, complex and brutal propaganda strategy.

Despite its success, Zarqawi was convinced that he needed a new strategy. Intercepted by US forces, Zarqawi's 2004 letter to AQ outlines his sectarian strategy targeting Shia civilians and its religious centers.[85] He reckoned that only a sustained campaign against the Shia could trigger a sectarian civil war and American disengagement. Once Iraq imploded, Zarqawi believed he would form a jihadist state.

His letter inveighs against the Shia for they are *the insurmountable obstacle, the prowling serpent, the crafty, evil scorpion, the enemy lying in wait, and biting poison.* Zarqawi describes them as *the enemy* and that they conspired with the Americans against the Sunnis.[86] Zarqawi hoped to unite the Sunni world against the Shia-American alliance to create a "greater Israel" in Iraq.

Starting in 2004 Zarqawi negotiated with AQ about an alliance. These conversations centered on his anti-Shia strategy. The Jordanian's hatred of the Shia and his mercenary killing of Muslims horrified AQ. Bin Laden and

Ayman Zawahiri urged Zarqawi to renew the fight against the American infidel and avoid sectarian attacks.[87]

By spring 2004 AQ Central was eclipsed by Zarqawi's network. Iraq was the key jihadist battlefield. Zarqawi, not bin Laden, was venerated in internet-jihadist chatter rooms and Iraq was the key recruiting ground for suicide bombers. Fearing being left behind in the jihadist struggle if they rejected his proposed alliance, AQ acceded to Zarqawi's plea.

Zarqawi's hatred of the Shia led him to target their mosques, pilgrims, clerics and religious celebrations. His letter to AQ describes the Shia so:

> These confirmed polytheists, who stand and pray at gravesides, who organized funeral possessions, who treat the Companions [of the Prophet] as infidels and insult the mothers of the faithful and the elite of this [Islamic] nation, do all they can to distort the Koran, presenting it as an offshoot of logical thought in order to disparage those who have a correct knowledge of it, in addition, they speak of infallibility of the [Islamic] nation … and in many other forms they give clear proof of atheism that abounds in their published works and original sources.[88]

His critique of the Shia emphasizes their religious rituals. The Shi'ite reverence for Ali and Husayn (the prophet's son-in-law and grandson) for Zarqawi smacked of polytheism anathema to the Sunni tradition.

The Jordanian hoped his attacks against the Shi'ite religious establishment would goad Muqtada al Sadr militia to retaliate against Sunnis. Zarqawi's sectarian war in Iraq he hoped would escalate across the region. Driven by ethno-sectarian rage Zarqawi also targeted Kurds, Sufis and Christians. All of whom are described in disparaging terms.[89] His terror campaign had devastating consequences.

Sunni-Shi'ite conflict reached unsustainable levels. Experts doubted that Iraq could avoid civil war. US Marine intelligence report in 2005 said that Anbar Province was lost for AQ had created a dangerous terror sanctuary. Scholarly opinion, similarly, urged American withdrawal and a containment policy to limit the regional impact of the disastrous Iraq war.

By 2006 Zarqawi's strategy seemed to be working well. Why didn't it succeed? Ayman al-Zawahiri wrote to Zarqawi in 2005 that his strategy risked alienating popular support.[90] Intercepted by US forces Zawahiri's

letter argues Zarqawi's course is unsustainable. The Egyptian wrote that "in the absence of this popular support, the Islamic mujahed would be crushed in the shadows" and "among the things which the feelings of the Muslim populace who love and support you will never fine palatable—also are the scenes of slaughtering hostages."[91] Zawahiri describes sectarianism as subsidiary to the fight against the Americans.

Zawahiri prediction was lost on Zarqawi who never wavered in his approach. Other AQI missteps proved more lethal. Among the most important of these was Zarqawi's war against the Sunni Anbar sheiks.

Starting late in 2006 the Iraqi Sunni insurgency against the Americans began to weaken.[92] AQ's use of Anbar Province brought it into conflict with tribal sheiks who chaffed at AQI's efforts to dominate smuggling operations and impose Sharia.[93] AQI responded by killing them and intensifying its Islamization policy. Claiming to represent an authentic Iraq resistance, AQI's core leadership was incongruously composed of foreigners. Their priority in creating a pan-Islamist jihadist state diverged from the interests of the Iraqi nationalists.

Zarqawi's attacks against all who opposed him contributed to his death. Hunted by US forces with twenty-five-million dollars bounty on his head, his time was limited. Based on an informant's tip Zarqawi was connected to a cleric whose movements were monitored by a US task force. Tracked to a rural safe house, US Special Forces took no risks by bombing the building with two five hundred pound bombs. Zarqawi's 2006 death was greeted with jubilation among Shi'ite Iraqis.

Zawahiri's debate with Zarqawi over his takfirist campaign resurfaced with the February 2014 split between AQ and the IS. Zarqawi's successors have intensified his brutal sectarian warfare. Today IS's media venerates its founding father and his brutal warfare doctrines. While muted almost a decade ago AQI sectarian strategy has greater resonance in today's Mideast. The religious passions generated by the intra-confessional Syrian civil war catalyzed the Islamic State's development and its embrace of a *total war* doctrine. Such an outcome was building for generations.

JIHADIST PROGRESSION TOWARD A TOTAL WAR DOCTRINE: SAYAF AL-ADL "MASTER PLAN"

Brian Fishman argues that AQ theorist Sayyaf al-Adl in 2004 developed a seven-stage plan that began with the organization's 9/11 attacks and ends with a jihadi state engaged in a war against the West.[94] Adl's document asserts AQ's *Holy Tuesday* operation was designed to provoke American military intervention in the Middle East. AQ would then proceed to *vex* and *exhaust* US forces in a protracted guerrilla war forcing their disengagement from the region.

Absent American military and financial support regional states would be vulnerable to jihadist insurrections. The ensuing power vacuum would give jihadists territorial space to create an Islamic revolutionary state that would wage a war of annihilation against Israel. Adl hoped that this twenty-first-century caliphate could unite the globe's 1.5 billion Muslims against the "forces of atheism."[95]

Fishman argues that AQ formulated its vision as a response to Zarqawi's insurgency. Alarmed by Zarqawi's rapid advance and his organization's brutality Adl hoped to harmonize AQI's operations within the central organization's overall vision. It clearly failed.

Though Fishman contends the jihadi struggle against the West is aimed at preserving the Middle East's Islamic character Adl's plan may have more expansive designs. His strategy's final stages suggest a *total war* doctrine that adheres to medieval Islamic military strategy. It envisions two camps locked into divinely willed conflict resolved when the "forces of faith" prevail over "atheistic" enemies.

Fishman describes Adl's master plan as "prescient" for it accurately forecasts the caliphate's development in the Levant.[96] He argues that AQ was willing to divert its attention away from attacking the US *far enemy* because Syria lacked American support. Given Damascus' innate vulnerability Adl thought that the Assad regime could be overthrown easily.[97] History has proven otherwise.

Other factors, however, play a role in Syria's centrality as the future epicenter of a jihadi state. The country features heavily in Islamic eschatology that forecasts an apocalyptic confrontation between Muslim and crusader armies. Prophetic hadith, for example, suggests that Islamic armies will annihilate the Roman crusaders at the Syrian town of Dabiq and eventually conquer the world.

Fishman asserts AQ advanced its caliphate creation timetable to appease Zarqawi's ambition. This development should, however, not deflect from bin Laden and Zawahiri's plans for a jihadi emirate to wage wars against multiple enemies. AQ's *near enemy* hatred is the driving factor in its anti-Western strategy that aims to purge *apostasy* within the Muslim world.

Faced with its diminished capacity to direct an effective *far enemy* strategy after 9/11 Al Qaeda hopes to capitalize on the unmooring of regional states by embedding into local insurgencies.[98] Syria's sectarian configuration, moreover, makes it an ethno-religious tinderbox. Motivated by sectarian and apocalyptic sentiments, Sunni and Shia jihadists s bloody the killing fields of Iraq, Syria and Yemen. Given Iran's growing presence across the Arab Mideast, AQ finds itself inextricably involved in intra-confessional antagonisms that cannot be easily dismissed.

THE CONTEXTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF JIHADIST HYPER TAKFIRISM AND VIOLENCE

David Rapoport argues that the Islamist *fourth wave* of terror began in 1979.[99] The year was extraordinary for it generated expectations of Islam's rebirth. The Afghan jihad galvanized Islamic world. The vast flows of foreign fighters to Afghanistan and the insurgency's success in defeating Soviet forces reinvigorated Islamic militancy. It laid the formation for AQ's transnational jihadist finance and terror infrastructure.

Though foreign fighters played a marginal role in the Afghan jihad, they were mythologized. *Arab Afghans* returned home and led bloody insurgent campaigns in Egypt, Algeria and Libya. The brutality of the GIA, EJI and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) and their targeting of regime forces and civilians undermined their popular appeal. Their collective failure and Hafez al-Assad's crushing of the Syrian MB a decade earlier was blamed on Zionist-Crusaders intent upon destroying Islam. This conviction gained momentum with the 1991 US military intervention that drove Iraq's military from Kuwait.

The 9/11 attacks and the *War on Terror* refocused jihadist energies in fighting the Western *far enemy*. US support for governments in Kabul and Baghdad effectively fused the *near* and *far* enemy. Since the 2003 US invasion of Iraq jihadist enemy hierarchies have blurred. The spread of

AQ's franchises to Iraq, the Maghreb, Yemen and Somalia fused global and local jihads's broadening enemies. While AQ's branches failed to achieve jihadist emirates, they unleashed horrible carnage. Wartime pressures and frustration have propelled greater jihadist violence. Near the end of his life bin Laden lamented the takfirist and *near enemy* focus of his affiliates. The gap between bin Laden's *far enemy* vision and the behavior of his regional appendages was so great that AQ's American media adviser Adam Gadahn urged separating from affiliates.[100]

The 1979 Iranian Revolution produced contradictory reactions among Sunni jihadists. Though inspired that a pro-Western regime was overthrown by an Islamic revolution, some Sunni jihadists saw Shia revolutionary agitation as threatening. Others while distaining the Shia's revisionism cooperated with Tehran. AQ, for example, established a relationship with Hezbollah during its Sudanese sanctuary period.

The expansion of Shi'ite influence in the region after the 2003 Iraq war propelled Sunni jihadism into more sectarian-takfirist directions. Iran's military engagement through its *Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps* (IRGC), and its promotion of its Hezbollah and Shia militia proxies in Iraq, Syria and Yemen generated Sunni resistance. The Syrian civil war has degenerated into a sectarian bloodbath with alarming regional security ramifications.

Sectarian conflict generates apocalyptic sentiments among Sunni and Shi'ite jihadists who see the killing fields of Syria as a *prophetic sign*. Relying on hadiths that foretell discord [*fitna*] in the Muslim world they see the Syrian civil war as a precursor to the Mahdi's emergence, Issa's [Jesus] return and Islamic victory over Satanic forces. Until the advent of the IS apocalyptic jihadist movements were either historically distant or outliers. Like Baghdadi's proto-jihadist state, the nineteenth-century millenarian Sudanese Mahdiyyah challenged Western regional hegemony. Modern apocalyptic movements also precede the IS.

The 1979 seizure of Grand Mosque of Mecca by Juhayman al-Otaybi's millenarian cult is especially relevant.[101] Not until recently has this group's significance been adequately appreciated. Jean-Pierre Filiu argues apocalyptic beliefs since the 1970s has risen across the Sunni Muslim

world.[102] Foreshadowing IS' emergence he argues jihadism integration with apocalyptic ideology could have revolutionary potential.

Jihadist frustration, sectarian passions, apocalyptic ideology and takfirist orientations created the conditions for the emergence of a Mideast proto-jihadist state. This configuration of forces contributed to the IS's *caliphate* that paradoxically galvanizes and divides the jihadist movement. The breach between IS and its AQ progenitor appears irresolvable. Recovering from its 2010 defeat IS was able to capitalize on the sectarian antagonisms generated by the Syrian civil war, the security vacuum caused by 2011 American military disengagement in Iraq and the Arab Spring's turmoil to fuse extremist doctrines that have been building in the jihadist world for decades. Though the *caliphate* did not survive the international military campaign against it, IS's endurance as a terror-insurgent movement is likely. We now proceed to how this movement developed.

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Chapter 3

The Islamic State's "Fifth Wave" Islamist Worldview

The ISIS's June 2014 Mesopotamian conquests astounded the world. More shocking was ISIS's announcement that a *caliphate* [Islamic State-IS] had been established. Self-proclaimed as *Caliph Ibrahim* Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in July 2014 gave a sermon at Mosul's Grand Mosque sermon demanded the Muslims world's loyalty and he proposed mass emigration (*hijrah*) to his transnational state.[1] Assisted by thousands of foreign fighters, advanced weapons captured from a retreating Iraqi army and a revenue base from oil profits and illicit enterprise, the Islamic State pursued a *total war* doctrine against its enemies.[2] Its media operations celebrated attacks by its supporters and agents in Paris, Nice, Brussels, Sydney, Copenhagen, New York, Munich, Manchester, Berlin, London, Barcelona and Ottawa and made impassioned appeals for more attacks. The organization has attacked across the Muslim world. IS operations have targeted Riyadh, Sana, Cairo, Istanbul, Dacca, Ankara, Jakarta, Tehran, Tunis and Tripoli. Its massacres of Shi'ites, Yazidis, Christians and Alawites have been denounced. Based on reports by the UN and *Human Rights Watch* former American secretary of state John Kerry accused IS of genocide against Yazidi and Christian communities.[3] Committed to uprooting religious *apostasy* and eviscerating *infidel* minorities IS spared no measure to implement its totalitarian vision.

The terror movement's unequaled success is a consequence of its ideological and organizational innovations furthered by the Arab Spring's turmoil. The IS's ideology and caliphate centric strategy are driven by takfiri, sectarian and apocalyptic ideals.

IS's exclusive community of *believers* have declared aggressive war against all opposed to its movement. The caliphate waged a two-pronged assault to purify the Muslim world and attack Western Zionist-crusaders. By targeting *near* and *far enemies* IS synthesizes past jihadist struggles.

Distinct among modern jihadist movements the caliphate's fanatical millenarian vision resonates strongly among extremists across the Islamic world. Despite its controversial innovations, the IS's worldview is a logical consequence of jihadism's historic trajectory.

IS crystalizes this development. As seen in the last chapter, the evolution in jihadi thought has contributed to IS's ultra-extremist worldview.

The caliphate fused multiple ideological currents. By casting its ideational net wide it attracted considerable jihadist support and invited severe resistance. IS is the ultimate ideological hybrid. Its integration of eschatological and sectarian sentiments and its caliphate building project paradoxically tantalizes and repulses the jihadist world.

Organizationally distinct IS's proto-jihadist state aspired to destroy colonial borders. Its caliphate centric strategy is controversial. Though desired by AQ, IS made the caliphate a reality and Baghdadi's transnational state galvanized many young jihadists. The caliphate's thirty-five thousand foreign fighters from over eighty countries exemplify its global appeal.[4] By forming a transnational jihadist state IS has produced unprecedented jihadi subdivisions.

IS's strategy is repudiated by AQ's ideologues.[5] Abu Muhammad Maqdisi, Abu Hamza and Abu Qatada denounce IS for its takfirist sectarian doctrine and unilateral caliphate declaration. They argue Baghdadi's caliphate announcement was arbitrary and without consensus among jihadist organizations. Building upon AQ's historic ties to the Taliban they look to the Afghan insurgent movement as the moral compass of the jihadist world.

The IS has mounted a vigorous defense of its worldview. Tutored by Maqdisi, Turki al-Bin'ali was considered the organization core ideologue before his May 2017 death in a US drone strike. Cole Bunzel argues that Binali parted company with Maqdisi over the IS's religious legitimacy.[6] The young cleric's pro-IS blogging on a Maqdisi-affiliated website resulted in his expulsion.

After leaving Maqdisi's instruction Binali was IS's chief religious defender penning a biography of Baghdadi's life justifying his genealogical and scholarly credentials as the *commander of the faithful*. Binali responded to IS critics by comparing the caliphate to the eighteenth-century Wahhabi state similarly criticized for its extremism and attacks on Shi'ites. Countering AQ, Binali argued IS had the governance viability and religious validity required for unrestricted *bay'ah*. Rejecting mainstream jihadist critiques that IS was a *battlefield command* requiring only restricted jihadi loyalties, Binali argued that Muslims and jihadist organization should unite under IS leadership.

AQ's February 2014 expulsion of the ISIS from its network has provoked violence between the two organizations where thousands of militants have died. IS's brutal war against *Ahrar al-Sham* and its assassination of AQ veteran Abu Khalid al-Suri suggests a permanent struggle.[7] Suri's death in an IS assassination produced AQ mourning and recriminations.[8]

The IS's English language magazine *Dabiq* denounced *Jabhat al-Nusra* (JN), AQAP and the Taliban for their *apostate* behavior.[9] The number of enemies Baghdadi's proto-jihadist state engendered was unprecedented. IS's media see its *totalistic war* as foreshadowing divine intervention and inevitable victory.[10]

The caliphate's ideological and military war against AQ is viewed by its supporters as an apocalyptic sign of *fitna* [internal discord] and a precursor to Islam's unification to combat Satanic *Zionist-Crusader* forces.

This chapter sketches IS worldview and its controversial jihadist warfare/governance strategy in two parts. First, IS's vision of a global Muslim community (*umma*) is developed and its strategy to defeat its enemies is sketched. The Islamic State's ideology impels it toward *total war* against all adversaries. Second, it advances an argument that IS has *fifth wave terrorist* dimensions that contributed to its break from AQ. Subsequent chapters will analyze how the IS's provincial strategy changed jihadist insurgencies in the Levant, North Africa and the Sahel. What follows is a delineation of IS worldview and how it comports with a fifth wave terrorist movement.

REVERSING WESTERNIZATION AND THE *UMMA*'S ATROPHY

The Islamic State sees the West as corrupting the *umma*. IS's former English language magazine *Dabiq* railed against Western dominance that it has weakened Islam and perverted its seventh-century values.[11] It argued the Islamic civilization achieved its highest development under Muhammad and his four *righteous* successors. Islam, *Dabiq* claims, thereafter, regressed.

IS asserts that Muslim revisionist rulers wrongfully incorporated European practices in law, art, science, philosophy, warfare and governance in their societies. Assimilation of non-Islamic values expanded under the Ottoman Turks and then spread dramatically during colonialism and independence. The diffusion of Western ideas (nationalism, liberalism, socialism, capitalism and secularism) accordingly shattered the *umma's* foundations by separating religious from political authority.

Borrowing from Salafist eighteenth-century reformers who advocated a return to medieval Islamic thought, the IS argues this separation substituted *divine* practices (Sharia-based rule) for the imperfection of manmade institutions.[12] Islamic society, moreover, was furthermore betrayed by a revisionist clergy (*ulama*) unwilling to defend traditional values and who are acquiescent to Westernized political elites.[13]

IS views these *alien* influences as undermining the *divine stitching* of Muslim order. Dabiq's tale *the Millah [path] of Ibrahim* sees Islam's historical degeneration as legitimating secular tyrannical rulers.[14] IS believes Muslim society has reverted back to a pre-Islamic state of ignorance or *jahiliyyah*. This progressive erosion of Quranic values, accordingly, led to the loss of Ottoman dynamism, the caliphate's 1919 collapse and colonial humiliation.

The jihadist organization's interpretation of *jahiliyyah* relies on past thinkers. Medieval scholar Ibn Taymiyya argued the Mongol invasions and the Abbasid caliphate's collapse were harmful to Islamic society for Mongol values were antithetical to the religion's original principles.[15] Taymiyya reasoned that Mongol conversion to Islam did not make them

true Muslims for their rule was not Quran based. Given this violation of the *divine path*, Taymiyya urged rebellion to restore Allah's *true intent* and reinvigorate the caliphate.

IS publications intersperse Muhammad's action with those undertaken by AQI leaders. Muhammad's *hijrah* (emigration) to Medina, his establishment of a community, his defeat of the pagans, his crushing of the *traitorous* Jews and his conquest of Mecca are compared with the ideological, leadership and organizational trajectory of AQI and its IS successor.[16] By linking Baghdadi with the Prophet, IS legitimates its *leadership* of the global Islamic struggle.

Like the Prophet, Zarqawi made his *hijrah* from Jordan to Afghanistan and to Iraq, fought against *polytheists* (the Shia) and *infidels* (US forces) and the Jordanian wanted to recreate a modern version of the Prophet's Medina in Iraq's Anbar Province. *Dabiq* presents AQI leaders including Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as part of *divine path* of Islamic renewal, purification and conquest.[17] It presents each of its leaders as part of an eschatological dynamic that foreshadows global Islamic conquest.

IS's Syrian stronghold in Raqqa was portrayed as its *new Medina*. The IS depicted jihadist rule in Raqqa by juxtaposing its Shura council rulings commanding stoning, crucifixion, beheadings, amputations and floggings with images of its charitable and educational programs.[18]

The *Institute for the Study of War* argued the Islamic State developed governing capacity in Raqqa delivering basic services and its Shura councils strictly enforced Sharia law.[19] Education, garbage collection, welfare provision and security services were IS functions. Morality police patrolled the streets, enforced mandatory prayers and banned alcohol, smoking and music. Women were forced to wear the veil and be accompanied by a male companion when in public.

With its June 2014 conquests, Raqqa's model was imposed across the *caliphate*. Viewed as *shirk* (polytheism) by IS militants Mosul's Shi'ite mosques, tombs and shrines were destroyed and *infidel* Yazidis and Christians were killed, enslaved or expelled.[20] Homosexuals were cast off high buildings. Primary, secondary and university education were reorganized to reflect medieval Islamic values.

Faced with the IS's June 2013 military victories in Iraq that threatened further territorial conquest, America militarily intervened in an air campaign against jihadist forces. Led by the United States the international community's military strategy after three bloody years *destroyed* IS's *caliphate*.

While the *caliphate*'s military position unraveled across Iraq and Syria by late 2017, its terror movement persists. At its height the *caliphate* stretched from Aleppo, Syria to Diyala Province in Iraq ruling over six million people.[21]

COMBATING MUSLIM APOSTATES AND ZIONIST-CRUSADERS

In the IS video *The End of Sykes-Picot* jihadists capture an Iraqi-Syrian border post and announce the end of colonial era borders.[22] Speaking in English, the video's IS spokesperson confidently predicts jihadist victory against the *tawaghit* (Arab despots) and he denounces the Yazidis as *devil worshipers* foreshadowing the organization's attempt to eradicate Mount Sinjar's Yazidi community. The video brazenly abrogates the Franco-British Sykes-Picot accord. Signed in 1916 the treaty divided the Ottoman Empire's North African and Mideast holdings between the French and the British whose colonial rule over these territories allowed the colonizers in IS' view to deepen *jahiliyyah*.

Jihadists see World War I's outcome as leading to Western domination of the Mideast.[23] Britain's 1917 *Balfour Declaration* promising European Jews a national homeland in Palestine is interpreted by IS jihadists as creating a Mideast European neocolonial presence. The Ottoman Empire's 1919 collapse and Turkey's 1924 abolition of the caliphate, is interpreted as an imperial scheme to dominate the region and destroy Islam.

The Islamic State's World War I anti-colonial narrative borrows from AQ thinkers.[24] They saw *apostate* Arab rulers as postcolonial puppets allied with a *Zionist-Crusader* order to plunder the Mideast. British and American policy is accordingly oriented toward supporting Israel and puppet Arab states to insure access to oil and strategic waterways. When their interests are threatened the West militarily intervenes in the region. The 1991 and

2003 Gulf wars are thus a neo-imperial strategy to dominate the region's petroleum reserves.

IS has sought to reverse the West's insidious impact of Western by developing a transnational jihadist state. *Dabiq*'s first issue *The Return of the Khalifa* presents Abu Bakr Naji's strategy outlined in *The Management of Savagery* as Zarqawi's plan to combat Zionist-Crusaders.[25]*The* magazine sketched steps: *hijrah* (emigration), *jamaah* (unity), destabilize *taghut* (apostate state), *tamkin* (unity) and *Khilafah* (caliphate) contained in Naji's book by comparing this sequence with Zarqawi and his successors actions. With its calculated brutality Naji's book may have inspired ISIS's many atrocities.

While the IS's critique of a *Zionist-Crusader* conspiracy is not unique, its strategy to combat Western dominance is novel. By conquering territory across national borders IS's leaders hope their *caliphate* will eventually defeat the liberal order. The terror organization's strategy occupied land along the Tigris and Euphrates river basins controlling key resources (water, oil, food). Dams, oil wells and grain storage bins were coveted.

The IS's *caliphate* centric approach diverged from AQ *far enemy* strategy of attacking the United States.[26] This deviation in strategy forced AQ Central to expel the IS from its network. When ISI leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi refused to comply with Ayman al-Zawahiri's order to withdraw his network from Syria, AQ Central expelled its Iraqi affiliate.[27] Baghdadi's subsequent repudiation of Zawahiri's leadership forced a schism within IS' network with its Syrian branch JN pledging alignment with AQ.

AQ's inability to force a wholesale American retrenchment from the Mideast and its failure to decisively strike the US homeland after 9/11, created the need for an alternative jihadist strategy. AQ's post-9/11 fragmentation and the crippling of its Waziristan operations by US drone strikes gave the ISI in Iraq the chance to build an alternative movement. ISI's opportunity became a reality during the Arab Spring and the US disengagement from Iraq.

The fall of Ben Ali in Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt due to mass protests and the NATO-assisted overthrow of the Gaddafi regime in Libya had vast political consequences across the region. The March 2011 protests against Syria's Bashar al-Assad's dictatorial state eventually morphed into

civil war that extended across Damascus' borders into Iraq. After the 2011 US withdrawal from Iraq, Baghdad pursued polices that persecuted the Sunni minority. Sunni politicians were prosecuted for supporting terrorism, Sunni army officers were demoted and many Sunni tribal militias were dismembered.[28] Sunni protests were brutally repressed. Badly damaged during the later period of the US occupation, ISI was able to recover as a *protector* of Sunni interests.

By 2013 ISI had rebuilt its terror network by securing political and tribal alliances and replenishing its ranks by attacking prisons and *liberating* hundreds of jihadist prisoners. The Syrian civil war, moreover, created the conditions for ISI's transnational expansion. The Sunni-dominated rebellion against Bashar al-Assad's Baathist regime must be viewed within the context of Syria's fragile confessional configuration. While avowedly secular, Syria's Baathist regime is dominated by Alawite, Shi'ite and Christian minorities. Comprising 70 percent of the population, Sunni grievances have been unaddressed. Prior revolts by the Sunni MB in the early 1980s were brutally repressed by Damascus.

The 2011 rebellion in key cities forced Assad to redeploy his forces away from the Iraqi border. This permitted ISI to transfer part of its network to Syria capitalizing on the chaos and Sunni disenchantment. ISI's April 2012 formation of a Syrian branch JN exploited preexisting jihadist recruitment networks and capitalized on the migration of foreign fighters into Syria to fight the Assad regime.[29]

Events in Syria and Iraq acted synergistically fortifying ISI's transnational network. By spring 2014 ISI's *Breaking the Walls* and *Soldiers of Harvest* terror campaigns had freed scores of jihadist prisoners and killed enough Iraqi security forces that the network was able to capture many Sunni towns and cities.[30] Entire Iraqi army divisions melted away with little resistance before the jihadist onslaught. Iraq's second largest city Mosul fell uncontested to ISIS militants.

Shortly after Mosul's fall, IS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani announced the *caliphate* and the organization's investiture of ISI emir Baghdadi as Caliph Ibrahim. This proclamation was reconfirmed in ISI's leader's 2014 address in the Grand Mosque in Mosul where Baghdadi demands the loyalty of Muslims across the world.

IS believes its caliphate is necessary to secure victory against *Crusader* forces. *Dabiq*'s "Remaining and Expanding" issue features pledges of support from Algerian, Egyptian, Yemeni and Saudi jihadists. The IS branched out into Libya where its militants established and eventually retreated from Derna and Sirte.[31] To rally the jihadist world to its cause IS has launched an assault against AQ. *Dabiq*'s sixth edition *Al Qaeda in Waziristan* critiques Zawahiri's leadership of the jihadist movement and his loyalty to Mullah Omar.[32]

IS challenged their AQ opponents to theological duel known as the *mubahalah* where divine intercession resolves disputes by favoring the *righteous* and punishing the *wicked*.[33] Within this context, IS success in fighting AQ-aligned JN was seen by the movement ideologues as *Allah's blessing*. Those who refuse to join the IS *Dabiq* argues will face inevitable destruction.

AQ's quarrels with its Iraqi branch have a turbulent history dating back to Zarqawi's AQI leadership and the Jordanian's sectarian strategy. The two organizations never aligned tactically or ideologically.

ZARQAWI'S LONG SECTARIAN SHADOW

The IS's sectarian approach is reflected in Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's 2004 letter to AQ Central. Intercepted by US authorities, Zarqawi's message argues that Shi'ites are *confirmed polytheists*.[34] The Jordanian viewed Shi'ites and Kurds as enablers of a diabolical Jewish conspiracy to establish an Iraqi Zionist state after the 2003 US invasion. Zarqawi's hatred toward Shi'ites joined with his plans to form a Sunni-jihadist emirate. Hoping to ignite sectarian civil war, state collapse and US withdrawal, AQI targeted Shi'ite civil and religious institutions killing thousands. Forming an Islamic *emirate* in 2006 Zarqawi's successors rebranded AQI as the ISI and they have fanatically pursued his sectarian vision.

IS publications criticize Shi'ite and Kurdish *apostasy* and celebrate their killing.[35] Based on Qur'anic verses and hadith *The Return of the Khilafah* sees the Islamic State as Allah's prophesied vanguard to rejuvenate Islam by restoring *tawid* [unity], purging it of *shirk* [polytheism] and fortifying the true *umma* [community] by integrating political and religious authority under Caliph Ibrahim.[36]*Report on the Islamic State 4* venerates the

slaughter of 1,700 Shi'ite army prisoners after Mosul's fall.[37] IS's militants proudly stand by mass graves in the edition's many horrific photos. Western hostages, Syrian soldiers and Coptic Christians have been the subjects of grisly beheading videos enthusiastically posted on *YouTube* and *Twitter.*

The IS views Shi'ites and Alawites as polytheists because they revere of the Prophet's son-in-law Ali and grandson Husayn.[38] Ibn Tamiyya theological judgment that Shi'ites were *apostates* legitimates IS's sectarian strategy.[39] Recalling past Shia revolts against Sunni authority, Taymiyya viewed them as un-Islamic and he called for killing their leaders.

Zarqawi expanded Tamiyya's ruling to the entire Shi'ite population and extended it to the Kurds whose beliefs he viewed as infected by communist influences. Like Zarqawi, *Caliph Ibrahim* has little regard for Christian and Yazidi *infidels* whose ritualistic slaughter by IS militants is revered in the organization's media outlets. Notoriously the IS's conquest of northern Iraq involved mass expulsion and massacres of Christian and Yazidi populations.

Dabiq's The Failed Crusade justifies the sexual slavery of Yazidi women.[40] In a February 2015 video titled "A Message Signed in Blood to the Nation of the Cross" IS beheads dozens of Egyptian Coptic Christians and its American accented IS spokesperson concludes that IS's *caliphate* will occupy Rome from Libya's shores.[41]

The destruction of Shi'ite and Alawite populations is considered essential by IS leaders for the *caliphate*'s advance. Their rationale is twofold. First, Shi'ite and Alawite polytheism contributes to a pre-Islamic ignorance that represses the *umma*'s development. Only by purifying the community of all *shirk* (polytheism) can the caliphate fortify its spiritual capability to defeat *Crusader* forces. Second, they believe the Shia and Alawites are Washington's allies against the IS.[42] In short, sectarian cleansing fortifies the IS's capacity to destroy the *Zionist-Crusader*'s Western order facilitating its *total war* doctrine.

IS'S APOCALYPTIC IDEOLOGY

The Islamic State's ideology provides a powerful jihadist narrative of Islamic regression, redemption and triumph. *Dabiq* presents IS' *caliphate* as a transcendental step leading to an *end times scenario* destined to destroy

Crusader forces. Under its eschatological narrative *Caliph Ibrahim* is subliminally portrayed as the *Mahdi* [redeemer] whose emergence triggers the return of *Issa* [Jesus] and the vanquishing of Islam's enemies.

Dabiq is named after the Syrian town that is the basis of a hadith-based prophecy foretelling Islamic annihilate of their *Crusader* adversaries.[43] The town centers heavily in IS' apocalyptic discourse. IS spokesperson Abu Muhammad al-Adnani's January 2015 *Die in Rage* address to IS soldiers and their *Crusader* enemies confidently predicts eminent victory against Western powers.[44] Despite its expulsion from Dabiq in October 2016 by Turkish-assisted Free Syrian Army (FSA) rebels IS's second English e-magazine *Rumiyah* [Rome] continues to embrace apocalyptic motifs.

The utilization of *prophetic* hadith epitomizes IS's faith in *divine forces* that belie its tactical rationality. The IS's apocalyptic imagery is a dominant theme in its outreach to young jihadists. Many IS fighters are motivated by apocalyptic themes. Jihadist social media is keenly interested in the *prophetic method* and the advent of the *end times*.[45]

The IS's millennialism is a Sunni-jihadist expression not seen since 1979's seizure of Grand Mosque in Mecca by Juhayan al-Otaybi's apocalyptic cult.[46] Though crushed by Saudi security forces, it like IS, borrowed from a Mahdist apocalyptic perspective. Jean-Pierre Filiu argues the Mahdist tradition has inspired a variety of medieval and modern protest movements.[47]

Led by Muhammad Ahmed, the nineteenth-century Mahdist revolt challenged British dominance in Sudan. Though the Sudanese *caliphate* was defeated by English and Egyptian forces, it is the closest historical parallel we have to the IS. While historically jihadist networks have not utilized an apocalyptic narrative, Filiu conclude his book by arguing that millenarianism has the potential to energize jihadist activity.[48] The IS presents its total war strategy within an eschatological context.

Caliph Ibrahim's July 2014 Mosul address is viewed by IS ideologues as an *apocalyptic omen*. Embracing a *prophetic method*, the *caliphate* is portrayed as the Muslim world's purifier of *apostasy* and avenger of Crusader *injustice*. With his doctorate in Islamic studies and his supposed descent from the Prophet's Quraysh tribe, IS portrays its caliph predestined

to rejuvenate the *umma*.[49] Its evocation of the apocalypse suggests an Islamist version of Jeffery Kaplan's *fifth wave* of tribal terrorism.

THE ISLAMIC STATE AS AN ISLAMIST FIFTH WAVE OF TERROR

Jeffery Kaplan's innovative *tribal terror* concept builds upon David Rapoport's *four wave* theory of modern terrorism. According to Rapoport, modernity has bred four distinct terror cycles lasting a generation.[50] Rapoport argues that revolutions in communication and travel have accelerated the global reach of terror groups, spreading their ideals among radicalized diaspora communities. The velocity by which ideas are communicated and the destructiveness of modern weaponry facilitate international terror activity with each cycle governed by a core set of ideas.

The *four waves* (anarchist, colonial, left-revolutionary and Islamist) have a particular agenda and a core set of enemies. Rapoport argues terrorist waves are short lived as each cycle dissipates due to a combination of internal weakness, generational change and external pressures.

Kaplan clearly admires Rapoport's analysis but critiques his *four wave* theory as static for it does not account for groups that separate from preexisting waves. This disengagement produces a unique millenarian dynamic that begins with Kaplan's Khmer Rouge *fifth wave* prototype.[51]

The Khmer Rouge is a *fifth wave* progenitor because the group in the 1970s broke from the left-revolutionary phase. Kaplan argues that the Khmer's combat experience and rural isolation in its brutal struggle were key determinants in its devolution. Such forces contributed to a cult like organization exacerbated by Maoist principles of localism and a millenarian desire to remake the world. Maoism conjoined with brutalization of war to create an organization committed to the destruction of the old order and the formation of a radical new society. The Khmer viewed themselves as the vanguard of this revolutionary transformation. Their proclamation of a new revolutionary calendar beginning in "year zero" and their forced migration of urbanites to the countryside exemplified this millenarian dynamic. Multitudes were subject to "revolutionary conditioning" that killed millions.

Based on the Khmer experience and his study of the Ugandan Christian millenarian LRA, Kaplan develops his *fifth wave* terrorism theory. Such

groups have distinctive qualities. Among these general "hallmarks" are: (1) a devolution from a preexisting terror wave; (2) a "hopeful" extreme idealism; (3) a physical withdraw into the hinterland; (4) a desired aim to recreate a past "Golden Age" by beginning the calendar anew; (5) an intent to destroy the old world and create a pure new society; (6) an inability to compromise and the use of force against internal dissidents; (7) a belief in perfectibility of humans and the creation of a new man; (8) a quest for new society leading to genocidal violence; (9) violence as a way of group life; (10) an emphasis on the subjugation of women and children; (11) recruitment of child soldiers and child brides; (12) the use of rape as a terror tactic; (13) a continuous cycle of violence engaged by the group across generations; (14) a particularistic emphasis on racial purity and ethno-tribal centrism; (15) pragmatic reliance on foreign allies to enhance group survival; (16) charismatic and authoritarian leadership; and (17) an apocalyptic worldview buttressed by intense religious commitment.[52]

While Kaplan sees similarities between *fifth wave* groups and jihadist groups he is reluctant to include them. His rejection of Islamist groups is based on their internationalization that he believes militates against the *fifth wave's* autarkic tendencies. Kaplan argues that Islamists' quest for a united *umma* prevent their *fifth wave* devolution. He remains, however, open to the prospect of some *fifth wave* Islamist groups.

Kaplan moreover does make exceptions. He argues that the Janjaweed and their violence against Darfur's black population exhibit *fifth wave* hallmarks.[53] He attributes their *fifth wave* behavior to nonreligious forces like environmental factors (draught and civil war) and Arab racism against blacks. The Janjaweed's Islamic ideology he argues is peripheral in its *fifth wave* evolution.

Kaplan's *fifth wave* Janjaweed designation is applicable to other Islamist groups. The Janjaweed's *fifth wave* brutality has been copied by other Islamist groups. Contrary to Kaplan, most jihadi groups have Muhammad's Medina community as their philosophical ideal. Jihadists efforts to reconstruct the Prophet's Medina community provides for ample experimentation, localism and autarky.

Historically, the quest for a unified *umma* has been challenged by localism, power struggles and divisions. Efraim Karsh argues that ethnic-

tribal divisions have militated against attaining a unified caliphate.[54] The bloody history of caliphate succession has included civil wars and assassinations. Fragmentation and local variation, not unity, has been the norm governing Islamic history. This pattern, moreover, has plagued jihadist movements. Thomas Hegghammer maintains that divisions within radical Islamist groups are endemic as leaders vie for power and failed jihads inspire intraorganizational feuding and persistent reorganizations.[55]

The mix of Arab racialism and Islam, moreover, has been a catalyst for localized ethnic cleansing. Walid Phares argues that Arabs hatred of Kurds, Berbers, Copts and black Muslims is nostalgic for renewed rule over ethno-religious minorities.[56] Despite their internationalism, jihadi groups are plagued by localism, brutality and divisions driven by an opportunity to replicate Muhammad's mythic Medina. These visions inspire much barbarism.

Jihadists develop rural insurgencies where government authority is weak. Borrowing from Che Guevara's *el foco* insurgency theory, Islamists hope their microcommunities will catalyze a populist revolution.[57] Jihadist rebels, who seize towns, establish Sharia councils often imposing drastic versions of Islamic law. They typically have religious police in these communities to enforce harsh moral codes.

Extremist brutality is magnified by the movement's elitist character and its militant's zealousness. Religious fanaticism and group dynamics cojoin to reinforce extremism. Martha Crenshaw, for example, argues that group dynamics and isolation can act as a break on instrumental reasoning and rational terrorist behavior.[58]

Millenarian groups seem vulnerable to this tendency.[59] IS religiously inspired violence fits Kaplan's *fifth wave* theory well. So do other Islamist groups like the millenarian cult Juhayman al-Otaybi in November 1979 seized Mecca's Grand Mosque. The cult's leaders Muhammad Abdullah al-Qahtani and Juhayman al-Otaybi hoped to use the mosque seizure to inspire a popular uprising against the Saudi monarchy.[60] Proclaiming Muhammad as the *Mahdi*, the group clearly miscalculated. After a month-long siege, Saudi security forces stormed the mosque killing hundreds of cult members and their hostages. Juhayan's remaining members were tried and its leaders were later executed.

Recreating Mohammad's Medina was a prime objective of the cult for it would lead to a caliphate. This vision sparked its millenarian fanaticism. Egomaniacal leaders like Qahtani believe they are divinely appointed to resurrect mythic communities. IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi follows this pattern, seeking to purify an unclean society and build its microcommunities into a caliphate.

AN ISLAMIST FIFTH WAVE OF TERROR

Jihadists see themselves as a vanguard divinely guided to purge the masses of their *apostasy.* They aspire to lead popular rebellions against *impious* leaders. Faced with this task, jihadist organizations are prone to extremism.[61]

Takfiri groups like IS separate from the larger Islamist movement to create their own unique *fifth wave*-like vision. This separation is reinforced by the movement's expulsion by AQ.

Kaplan's *fifth wave* theory is complex. Applying it to takfirist groups requires modifications. The table on the next page reconfigures Kaplan's theory into an Islamist-takfirist caste. Like the Christian millenarian LRA, *fifth wave* jihadist movements use maximum violence to destroy old orders and build new model societies.

Table 3.1 Key Components of Islamist Fifth Wave Groups

Rejection of Existing Social-Political Order	Muslim society is in a state of jahliyyah or ignorance of divine truth that is promoted by apostate regimes. This requires separation from society and rebellion against it
Idealization of a Mythic Past	Reconstituting Muhammad's Medina Community and the caliphate developed by his four righteous successors are the desired end-states
The Quest for Millenarian Justice	The destruction of *apostasy* and the return to the purity of Muhammad's Medina experience will generate universal happiness as a caliphate develops
Youth Culture	Males between eighteen and thirty-nine form the bulk of jihadi groups
Brutalization of Women and Children	Islamist misogyny and forced veiling of women. Attacks on unveiled women, limitations on female education and employment. Forced marriages with jihadi fighters. Coerced recruitment of boys into jihadist organizations
Kidnapping	Women and children frequently kidnapped and sold into slavery
Ethnic and Sectarian Cleansing	Campaign of targeted killing of religious minorities (Shi'ites, Alawites, Sufis), Yazidis and Christians. Destruction of Mosques, Shrines, Burial Sites and Churches associated with religious minorities or deemed polytheistic. Broad use of takfir (e.g., excommunication) of Muslim opponents justifying their killing
Unrestrained Violence	Relentless military campaign of suicide bombings, IED and car bombs aimed at soldiers, police and civilians. Takfir facilitates killing of opponents including fellow Sunnis
Charismatic Leadership	Islamist fifth wave groups typically led by powerful dynamic emir who combines religious and military authority
Development of a New Society	Violent destruction of decadent *apostate* order and creation of modern version of Muhammad's Medina community and caliphate of his immediate successors

The IS has significant *fifth wav*e tendencies. These characteristics pit it against other Islamist groups. Since late 2013 IS has warred against fellow Islamist groups including AQ's Syrian affiliate JN in a struggle to direct the jihadist war against Assad's regime. IS has embarked upon a radical takfiri sectarian agenda that disengages them from the broader Islamist movement. Its assassination of revered jihadi veteran Khalid al-Suri reflects its rejection of traditionalism. Suri's death convulsed Ayman al-Zawahiri. IS's assault on JN shows its contempt for traditional jihadi groups.

INJUSTICE, JIHAD AND THE RESTORATION OF DIVINE ORDER

The IS rejects existing colonial era territorial boundaries. For IS the restoration of the caliphate is necessary to avenge Muslim honor and resurrect Islamic regional dominance. It seeks to restore Muslim governance over former Ottoman territories.

It sees territory held by past caliphates as part of Allah's providence.[62] By linking northern Syria with western Iraq, IS has done something unprecedented. IS's predatory designs on Baghdad evoke the imperial glory of medieval Islamic rule. Its media operations predicted a future conquest of Baghdad restoring the territorial cohesion of the Abbasid caliphate and the *perfection* of Sharia rule.

A YOUTHFUL PATRIARCHAL JIHAD

The IS membership is largely composed of young males. The *Soufan Center* in a June 2014 study of foreign fighter migrations to Syria reports that most of these fighters are between eighteen and twenty-nine years old, making this age cohort younger than earlier jihadist wars.[63] The report finds that most of the twelve thousand foreign fighters in Syria have joined AQ-inspired groups. Many of these militants were recruited by IS's *YouTube* videos and extensive *Twitter* campaigns.[64]

Jihadist social media on the Syrian conflict is dominated by sectarian insults and derogatory language.[65] Frequent references to *rafidha* and *Nusayri* by Sunni Syrian and foreign jihadists imply Shi'ites and Alawites are polytheistic infidels whose control of the Iraqi and Syrian governments and repression of Sunnis must be combated.

The IS's professional videos with their violent images resonate with frustrated, bored and angry young men. Many IS fighters had little economic opportunities and their religious piety impels them to avenge Muslim honor. IS's leadership is, furthermore, exclusively male and slightly older than the rank and file.

Since its AQI years the IS has targeted Shi'ites, Christians and Kurds. AQI's attack against the revered Shi'ite Samara mosque in 2006 almost

stoked civil war and state collapse.

Non-Muslim minorities have been brutally treated by IS brigades. The group's conquest of northern Iraq witnessed the mass expulsion of Mosul's large Christian population and a genocidal campaign waged against the Yazidi community. Considered devil worshipers by IS extremists, over 150,000 Yazidis were forced out of their communities and besieged by jihadist forces at Mount Sinjar. Fearing a wholesale slaughter of the Yazidi minority, a reluctant Obama administration authorized air strikes against IS forces and airlifted supplies to the beleaguered community.

IS's jihad in Syria has been equally brutal and has taken on a sectarian and misogynistic caste. *Human Rights Watch* reports that IS militants in August 2013 cleansed Alawite villages in coastal Latakia.[66] Hundreds of civilians were killed with entire families summarily executed. Surviving women and children were kidnapped by jihadists. Fighting between IS and Kurdish brigades in Northeast Syria has been endemic since 2012.

The June 16, 2014, *United Nation Security Council* report condemns the IS violence and ethnic cleansing in recently conquered areas in Iraq. IS militants seize and plunder people's houses.[67] In mid-July 2014 IS inspired a mass exodus of Christians from Mosul when it demanded either their conversion or the payment of a special tax.

Amnesty International reports the IS's Syrian network runs torture facilities and detention centers where summary executions are common.[68] Children are often forcibly recruited in the ranks of IS jihadists as fighters. Shi'ite shrines and mosques are destroyed. Churches are desecrated and burned. Crucifixions and beheadings are part of the group's systematic intimidation and terror campaign.

CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW SOCIETY

Charismatic leadership dominates IS's organization. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi served as a deputy to Abu Umar al-Baghdadi and Abu Hamza al-Mujahir in AQ's Iraqi operations. He began to lead the organization in 2010 after US forces killed the ISI's top leadership. Baghdadi's rule over the network resulted in its expansion into Syria during the Arab Spring revolt.

Fueling Baghdadi's ambitions is his reputation as a religious scholar with a doctorate in Islamic studies. One cleric claims that his family descends from the Prophet's tribe reinforcing his religious authority.[69]

Baghdadi's caliphate declaration has been attacked by AQ. Its chief ideologues have lambasted Baghdadi for having failed to consult with other groups prior to his proclamation.[70] IS is seen as a pariah within the broader Islamist movement. Despite such criticisms, Baghdadi received some support from disaffected AQ members across the world.

Baghdadi's millenarian vision seeks to undo modern society and advance Islamic conquest. He presents himself as a defender of persecuted Sunnis across the world. His network put a premium on Sunni tribal engagement and the provision of state services.

The IS celebrated its tribal engagement policy and championed the organization as a *protector* of Sunni interests.[71] Its tribal policy should be viewed as transactional where tribal federation's fealty toward the caliphate gave them access to state services and security. Alternatively tribes that failed to give IS a loyalty pledge were ruthlessly liquidated by the caliphates soldiers.[72] Within the sectarian fissures of Syria's civil war IS galvanized Sunni tribal support.[73]

IS's *human side* should not be dismissed. Many of its video productions dramatized its education and charitable work.[74] IS publicized its caliphate's governance project and the popular support it generated. When it seized power IS was initially popular among the Sunni population for its fight against corruption, its honesty and its provision of security. Some studies suggest that its initial governance compared favorably to the Iraqi and Syrian states.[75] Table 3.2 sketches IS's "hallmarks" as a *fifth wave* movement.

Table 3.2 Islamic State as Fifth Wave Islamist Terror Group

Islamist Fifth Wave of Terror Hallmarks	*Islamic State-IS*
Rejection of Existing Social and Political Order	Historic injustice of nation-state boundaries created by colonial era Sykes-Picot accord that portioned the lands of the caliphate. The Assad and Maliki minority apostate regimes exploit and oppress pious Sunni majorities substituting secular rule for the Sharia's divine rule
Idealization of Mythic Past	Create a modern version of Medieval Abbasid caliphate with al-Andalus and Ottoman Empire territorial extensions
Quest for Millenarian Justice	Destroy Alawi and Shi'ite apostasy, avenge past transgressions and restore rightful Sunni rule. Resurrected caliphate and Sharia basis for social equity and justice
Youth Culture	IS' foreign fighter and Iraqi-Syrian rank and file between nineteen and thirty-five years old. Attract young fighters though social media outreach
Brutalization of Women and Children	Subjugation of women and children through kidnapping and slavery. Recruitment of child soldiers
Kidnapping	Used as a mechanism for terror and financial profit
Sectarian and Ethnic Cleansing	Targeting of Kurds, Sufis, Shi'ites, Alawites, Yazidis and Christians. Bombings of churches and Muslim minority mosques, shrines and burial sites. Attacks on clergy who reject IS ideology. Forced expulsions of rival group's civil populations. Kidnapping of women and children
Unrestrained Violence	Takfir applied to all opponents including fellow Sunnis and opposing jihadist groups
Charismatic leadership	Group's emir aspires to mythic status and has loyal following based on religious and coercive authority—Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi—Caliph Ibrahim
Development of New Society	Cleansing of the old decadent order an construction of pious just society based on the Qur'an

THE IS'S "FIFTH WAVE" BREAK FROM AQ

AQ's February 2014 expulsion of the IS is the culmination of tense historic relations with its affiliate. Ayman al-Zawahiri conflicted relationship with AQI's progenitor Abu Musab al-Zarqawi centered on the propriety of his sectarian-warfare approach. Since Zarqawi's death AQI's organizational successors have intensified his strategy infusing it terrorist eschatological motifs.

William McCants argues that ISI post-Zarqawi leadership also exhibited apocalyptic orientations. Under Abu Ayyub al-Masri and Abu Omar al-

Baghdadi ISIS's 2006 proclamation of an Islamic *emirate* was viewed as an *apocalyptic* act. They viewed one of their leaders as the Mahdi whose emergence would lead to a final battle against *Crusader-Rafidah* forces.

ISI unraveled after the Anbar Awakening movement tribal insurrection against its network magnified by the success of American counterterror operations. Masri and Baghdadi were killed by US forces in 2010 and by the end of the American occupation the organization was widely considered *defeated* by counterterror analysts. McCants argues that ISI's eschatological ruminations were viewed alarmingly by AQ's leadership.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's leadership, however, changed ISIS fortunes which were abetted by the power vacuum created by the US military departure and by escalating sectarian conflicts. Baghdadi fortified the organization and modified its apocalyptic narrative. Under his reformation IS's caliphate development was viewed by IS supporters as a precursor to the Mahdi's emergence. Combined with takfirist and sectarian values, IS's eschatological vision creates an Islamist *fifth wave* movement that tantalizes and divides jihadists.

IS *outcast status* heightens its appeal among young jihadists attracted to its heterodox revolutionary message. With the IS's strategy jihadism has reinvented itself departing from past practices yet remaining faithful to core ideas.

Baghdadi's state altered the movement's ideological and tactical direction. Its rivalry with AQ intensified IS's fanaticism strengthening its core values and caliphate-centric direction.

Responding to the IS's challenge AQ emphasizes its ideological *moderation* and *inclusiveness*. AQ's post-9/11 model hopes to imbed with indigenous jihadist insurgencies to further its strategic objectives.[76]

This message masks the tactical character of AQ's *inclusive* strategy and the difficulty the central leadership has in enforcing its vision.[77] AQ's aspirations have floundered for its local *branches* luxuriate in blood lust and ideological passions. JN killing of religious minorities is but one example. While massacres of Druze communities by local commanders have been repudiated by JN leader Golani it reflects AQ's inability to restrain the excesses of its local commanders.[78] JN's re-branding and its organizational

break from AQ in 2016 highlight some of the problems the parent organization has had in directing its fractured dysfunctional network.

AQ's ideological discourse, moreover, has recently emphasized sectarian themes. References to Shi'ite *rafidah* and Alawite *Nusayri* permeate AQ's language that prioritizes countering Iranian, Hezbollah and Shi'ite militia influence in Syria.[79]

Considered an opponent of sectarian politics AQ emir Ayman al-Zawahiri now resorts to anti-Shia rhetoric.[80] AQ now is pitted against Alawite forces in Syria and the Shia-affiliated Houthi rebels in Yemen.

It is a striking testament to IS's alteration of the jihadist project that AQ has departed from its anti-sectarian strategy and now is actively involved in jihadist insurgencies against Muslim minority sects. Syria has emerged as a key battleground between the two organizations. The country has a history of Islamist revolts that we explore in the next chapter.

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13. Dabiq 7, "The Extinction of the Grey Zone" in *From Hypocrisy to Apostasy* accessed at http://www.clarionproject.org/news/Islamic-State-ISIS-Isil-propaganda-magazine-dabiq, 54–58. This is a clear effort to appeal to all Muslims that there can no longer be a third choice between the West and the Islamic State and that IS will be successful in uniting the *umma* to destroy the crusader order.

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Chapter 4

The Islamic State's Impact on Jihadist Insurgency in Iraq and Syria

Iraq and Syria center heavily in IS's worldview. Islamic eschatology, medieval history and jihadist ideology explain IS's Levant-centric focus. Syria salience lies in tales of Muhammad prediction that an apocalyptic battle between Muslim armies and Roman crusaders will occur in that area.

Iraq's significance lies with its illustrious Islamic past. Baghdad was the capital of the medieval Abbasid Empire that ruled for hundreds of years until the Mongol conquests in the thirteenth century. IS's restoration of an Iraqi-Syria caliphate echoes past glory and attempts to legitimate its standing in the Muslim world. Jihadist ideology, moreover, complements these historical and eschatological factors.

This chapter looks at IS's caliphate restoration within a historical context of past jihadist revolts and how it has organizationally and ideologically recast the jihadist struggle. The IS succeeded where its predecessors failed. What drove this effectiveness forms a critical part of this case study.

It has a four part organization. First, jihadist views of Iraqi and Syrian state and society are sketched. This section looks at how various Islamists groups reacted to Baathist rule in these countries. Second, a comparative examination of past revolts in the Levant is undertaken. Historically, jihadist insurrections have a cyclical pattern featuring rapid *mobilization*, *extremism* and *destruction*. Past revolts in Iraq and Syria are no exception to this cycle. AQI and the Syrian MB, for example, radicalized and their extremism invited implosion. Despite these failures the region's jihadi organizations were resilient and remained poised to renew their struggle. Third, the Arab Spring's impact, growing sectarianism and the rebirth of the

jihadist struggle is discussed. Political instability and intra-confessional antagonism have assisted the rejuvenation of jihadist organizations across the region. Finally, how IS recast the jihadist struggle is examined and its capacity to preserve its movement is assessed.

IRAQI ISLAMIST VIEWS OF STATE AND SOCIETY

Islamism and ethno-sectarian identity in Iraq overlap. Formed by the British in 1923 Iraq's territorial configuration did not facilitate the development of a coherent national identity. With Arabs, Kurds, Turkoman, Yazidi and Assyrian communities and a Shia-Sunni sectarian divide Iraqi national consciousness was difficult to implant. Despite its nationalistic ideology the Baathist revolutionary state (1968–2003) failed to create a cross cultural communitarian identity.[1]

This is especially true for the Shia majority. Their religious narrative emphasizing past repression and the Shia's exaltation of past martyrs clashed with Baathist secular nationalism.[2] The Shia community reveres Muhammad's son-in-law Ali and his grandson Hussein. They, furthermore, exalt the medieval twelfth imam (now in suspended animation) as a future Mahdist redeemer to liberate their community that has invited Sunni condemnation of "polytheism." Shi'ite revolutionary violence, moreover, has historical roots. The sect dominated the 1920s anti-British revolt and they repeatedly rebelled against Saddam Hussein's regime.[3] Though these insurrections were crushed they contributed to the Shia's revolutionary mindset exacerbating their resentment and martyrdom culture. Not until the 2003 US invasion and regime change did the Shia reach their full cultural, religious and political empowerment.[4] The cycle of Shia death, martyrdom, revenge and redemption continues in the current war against the IS.

Iran's proximity reinforced Iraqi Shia revolutionary resistance. The Baathist state's brutal war against Iran exacerbated sectarian cleavages in Iraqi society. Saddam saw Shia militancy furthermore as an insurrectionary fifth column. Following Iraq's defeat in the Persian Gulf War the 1991 Shia insurrections were savagely crushed by Iraqi forces. Between 20,000 and 100,000 people are believed to have died in Hussein's military response to the revolt.[5]

Sunni radicalism in Iraq contrastingly does not have deep historical foundations.[6] Formed in 1951 the MB grew rapidly during the 1950s and 1960s under Iraq's parliamentary system. After the 1968 Baathist revolution Sunni Islamists were crushed by the regime. The Baathists saw the Islamists as their historic enemy. With its leaders imprisoned or executed the Iraqi MB was in exile during most of the Baathist period. Only in the 1990 did Hussein reconcile with the Iraqi Brotherhood.[7] After the war with Iran the Baathists sought to *Islamicize* their regime. During the 1990s Baghdad engaged with Hussein Turabi's Islamist Sudanese regime seeking a rapprochement with Sunni religious community.

Saddam's efforts to use religion and promote Islamic values may have ironically facilitated Sunni extremism that the IS eventually exploited. His campaign was so effective that many ex-Baathists joined the ISI, some serving as middle and lower level military commanders.[8] Baathist promotion of religious values was buttressed by the revolutionary backlash against the US invasion and its empowerment of the Shia majority. Combined these forces catalyze Sunni Islamic extremism.

IRAQI ISLAMIST REACTIONS TO SADDAM HUSSEIN

Seizing power in 1968 the Baathist revolutionaries promoted a secular socialist authoritarian agenda. The movement's key ideologue Christian Michel Aflac viewed Islamists as adversaries.[9] Repression of Islamist groups throughout the 1970s was severe. Iraqi security services penetrated Sunni, Kurdish and Shia Islamist organizations. Shia clerics and their religious foundations were strictly controlled with quietest apolitical imams patronized by the regime.[10] Those politically activist Shia clerics who opposed Hussein's rule were imprisoned and some were executed.

Shia and Sunni Islamists reaction to the Baathist regime share some commonalities. The Islamist critique of the regime was multifaceted. They viewed Saddam's regime as Westernized repressive state that sought the destruction of Islam. The state's promotion of women's rights, its liberal policies on alcohol, prostitution and night clubs were rejected by Islamic radicals as *immoral* and *unnatural*.[11] Baathist emphasis on a secular legal system Islamists believe substituted imperfect man-made law for Sharia's divine justice. Religious fundamentalists were, moreover, livid over

Hussein's exaltation of Iraq's Babylonian past that for them exemplified *jahiliyyah*'s intensification.[12] Baghdad's efforts to develop a national Iraqi consciousness were rejected as dividing the *umma*.

No religious grouping was exempt from the reach of the security services. Even Kurdish Sufis were monitored by Iraqi police and intelligence agencies. Opposition to Hussein was pronounced among the Shia who saw the regime as a Sunni and Christian front to repress them.[13] Shia religious tensions with Hussein's state were inflamed by its war with Iran and the regime's efforts to control its religious establishment.

Though most Shia fought for the regime some Shia revolutionary organizations sympathized with Tehran. They hoped to capitalize on the war's turmoil to liberate their coreligionists from Sunni oppression. With many Iranian educated Iraqi Shia clerics and Iranian pilgrims visiting Iraq's many shrines some cross border loyalties existed.[14] This guaranteed that some Iraqi Shia would favor resistance against Saddam's state.

These sentiments were prominent in activist Iraqi Shia clerics who admired Khomeini's theocratic state and saw Tehran as their community's liberator. Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Bakir al-Sadr's Najaf-based religious movement exemplified Shia resistance.[15] Despite Baghdad's efforts to co-opt the outspoken religious leader, his condemnation of the Baathists incited the regime's wrath. After being repeatedly detained Sadr in 1980 was tried and executed for insurrectional activities. During the 1980–1988 war with Iran, Tehran's religious propaganda vilified the Baathist state as *pagan*, *immoral* and a *Zionist-American* puppet.[16]

After the war the Baathists began to promote pan-Islamic values. This controversial initiative invited resistance within the party which Hussein overcame.[17] Baghdad pursued a two-track policy of religious patronage and repression. Sunni and Shia mosques and religious foundations were subsidized and apolitical clerics were favored. Islamic values were promoted, shrines were refurbished, alcohol sales and other Western *vices* were restricted. Many of Baghdad's night clubs were closed. The regime's faith-based initiatives tried to integrate Islam and Iraqi national identity to legitimize Hussein's authoritarian state.

Amatzia Baram argues that Saddam Hussein's *Islamist* turn was attributable to a number of forces.[18] First, the war with Iran made Baghdad

vulnerable to religious criticism that it was a defender of secular *apostasy.* This was especially worrying in light of rising religious fervor in Iraqi society. The Sunni community was experiencing a religious rejuvenation. Second, the movement toward Islamism in Iraq mirrored trends across the Muslim world. Once secular regimes in Egypt and Libya, for example, also promoted Islamic values.

Hoping to capitalize on intensifying religious convictions among Iraqis Hussein needed to embrace Islam to legitimate his struggle against Iran's theocratic state. Baathist rhetoric vilified Khomeini's state as *un-Islamic* and portrayed Hussein as a defender of the *true faith.* The Iranian regime's *vilayat al-fiqah* (rule of the jurisprudent) that institutionalized clerical rule was condemned as polytheistic.[19] Saddam's appropriation of religious values did not discriminate across confessional communities for he was equally critical of Sunni Wahhabi ideas and the violent jihadist organizations they spawned.

The regime's critique of Sunni religious fundamentalism invited hatred among jihadists including AQ's embryonic network. OBL sought to use jihadists against Saddam's forces in Kuwait before the advent of the Persian Gulf War.[20] Though initially it may have been a cynical ploy to legitimate his regime, accounts of the Baathist Party's evolution suggests that Islamist transformation was genuine. Before his execution Saddam Hussein exhibited religious convictions. While the Iraqi Baathists embraced religious values, their Syrian counterparts resisted Sunni Islamists. Conflict between the Syrian Baathists and Sunni extremists has historical roots in the country. Syria's current civil war echoes past conflict.

SYRIA: ISLAMIST REACTIONS TO ASSAD'S BAATHIST STATE

Artificially constructed by colonial forces Syria's territorial configuration created a cultural and religious polyglot. French colonizers favored Christian, Alawi and Druze minorities at the Sunni majority's expense. France, moreover, had granted Alawi coastal mountain communities considerable autonomy further encrusting sectarian loyalties.[21] Colonial minority policies exacerbated regional confessional antagonisms. France split Lebanon from Syria in 1943 hoping to secure Maronite Christian

dominance. The Sunni majority coexists uneasily with Alawi, Kurdish and Christian minorities. With Syria ethnically and religiously stratified, the seeds of the sectarian war were sown.

Independence restored Sunni dominance exacerbating minority resentment. Many Alawi toiled in Sunni-owned estates or worked for its urban classes. While the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) was formed a decade later, its early development was influenced by the 1930s anti-colonial struggle. The 1940s French departure accelerated Islamist political development. Unlike the Egyptian MB branch the Syrian Brothers developed along a moderate path that embraced free elections and parliamentary politics.

Syria's 1950s parliamentary politics featured a Sunni MB clashing with a Christian and Alawi-led Baathist party.[22] Deprived of private sector opportunities the Alawi's were over represented in Syria's armed forces. By the late 1950s Baathist Party loyalties had penetrated the officer corps who became alienated with the civilian government and its discriminatory policies.

The Brothers' prosperous and educated Damascene leadership sought political accommodation.[23] The moderate trajectory of the Syrian Brothers political program did not endure. The Baathist 1963 seizure of power radicalized the party and facilitated the rise of Aleppo and Hama party elites committed to jihad against the Alawi Baathist elite.

The 1963 coup d'état began an era of Baathist dominance that evolved into familial dynastic rule. During the1960s Baathist rule secularized civil society and its socialist economic policies alienated the Sunni urban bourgeoisie and landed gentry. MB militants organized protests against state policies.

The Baathists responded by banning MB membership turning the organization into a violent insurgent network. Formed in 1964 the MB's extremist*Combatant Vanguard* assassinated Baathist party officials. Led by Marwan Hadid the Brothers sought to cleanse Syria of Baathist and Alawi *impurity* and create a Sharia state.[24] Arrested in 1965 Hadid died in prison a year later becoming a *martyr* for an extremist organization.

By the late 1960s the Baathist socialist revolution had stalled as Syria's economic stagnation produced ruling party divisions. Baathist militants in

Syria's officer corps supported Air Force Colonel Hafez-al-Assad, an Alawite, who consolidated his position within the party's hierarchy. Colonel Assad's 1970 military coup was designed to temper the radical thrust of Baathist social and economic policy to placate Sunni economic elites.[25] Assad's early rule assuaged Syria's entrepreneurial class through marketplace reforms. While hoping to pacify the restive Sunnis Assad never less reinforced Alawi dominance of the armed forces and promoted family members to top level governmental positions.

Brotherhood opposition to Baathist rule grew throughout the 1970s mounting a serious challenge to Assad's regime. The Brother's antipathy toward Assad's government was driven by many factors. The government's secular Pan-Arabist socialist ideals offended their Islamist worldview as did the Alawi presence in top political and security positions. The Alawi are followers of a tenth-century religious movement that evolved from a Shia branch of Islam that believes that twelfth imam will liberate the world from injustice.

Given their reverence for the twelfth imam, the Sunni Brothers considered the Alawi to be polytheists. Relying on medieval Sunni legal scholar Ibn Taymiyyah ruling that the Alawi's were not real Muslims, the Brotherhood presented the Baathist state as an *apostate* regime.

Assad's constitutional reform that the country's president need not be a Muslim sparked widespread protests and violence.[26] The Brotherhood's *Combatant Vanguard* continued its targeted assassination and urban guerrilla campaign. The exile of the MB's Damascene moderates secured the ascendancy of radical factions that wanted to intensify the insurrection.[27] Influenced by Sayyid Qutb writings, Aleppo and Hama-based radicals urged armed resistance.

ISLAMISTS AND THE BAATHISTS

Modern Iraq and Syria are indelibly shaped by Baathist repression. Their authoritarian states ended prospects for democratization. The Baathist rule featured torture, mass executions, employed chemical weapons, forced labor and ethno-sectarian slaughters. Despite their common authoritarian outlook the Iraqi and Syrian Baathists were adversaries. Saddam even

assisted the Syrian Brothers 1980s insurrection against Haffez al-Assad's regime.

Saddam's barbaric regime unleashed three disastrous wars and ethnic cleansing against the Kurds and Shia. His authoritarian state and tyrannical security service borrowed heavily from European fascism and communism. Its conflict with theocratic Iran killed over a million people. Despite its promotion of Islam, most Shia remained opposed to the regime. Like Muammar Qaddafi, Saddam's appropriation of Islamic values was viewed as heretical by religious fundamentalists. Few believed that the regime had made a sincere transition. Yet this may have actually been the case.

What is striking about Islamist reactions to the Baathist regimes in Iraq and Syria are the profound differences. In Iraq the Shia majority led numerous insurrections against Hussein's regime to avenge past Sunni injustice. Christian and Sunni dominance of Hussein's state stoked Shia animosity and sowed the seeds for later conflict. Syria was also convulsed by confessional antagonisms.

Assad's dynastic rule enraged the Sunni majority that viewed the regime as an apostate Western creation. Unlike Iraq Sunni-jihadist extremism has deep historical roots in Syria. The Muslim Brotherhood's (MB's) 1980s revolt and Assad's complete destruction of the Brotherhood's Hama redoubt had profound consequences a generation later when Sunni extremists evoke its legacy in their insurrection against Haffez al-Assad's son.[28] Shaped by Baathist brutality political and sectarian conflicts acted synergistically.

The Assad's regime rarely evoked Islamist values. Damascus' conflict with Sunni-jihadists and the Alawi's heterodox beliefs gave Assad little space to make an Islamist transition. Even if one was attempted few would believe it genuine. Bashar did, however, support the development of a Sunni-jihadist network in Syria during the US occupation of Iraq assisting the flow of foreign fighters, arms and supplies to AQI.[29] By assisting Zarqawi's Syrian network Assad unleashed a profoundly violent legacy.

ISLAMIST REBELLIONS: MOBILIZATION, EXTREMISM AND DESTRUCTION

Zarqawi's Network

There is little history of Sunni-jihadist violence in Iraq before the American 2003 invasion. Though Shi'ite religious revolutionaries violently mobilized against the Baathists, there were no real jihadist networks operating in Iraq. The Bush Administration's argument that Saddam's regime and AQ were aligned was based on faulty intelligence and the Baathists effectively suppressed the development of any Sunni extremist network. The US invasion triggered an Islamist insurgent movement that morphed into IS's progenitor AQI.

The closest development of pre-2003 Sunni-jihadist network was in autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan where the Baathist state had little control. Islamic preacher Mullah Kekar helped to find the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK) in 1988 hoping to overthrow Saddam's *apostate* regime and form a Sharia state. Krekar has spent much of his controversial life as a political refugee in Norway. He was granted political asylum in 1991 but currently awaits extradition to Iraq for terrorism. Moving to Iraq in 2001 Krekar became the group's emir in 2003 joining forces with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi during AQI's embryonic development.[30] During this period IMK often clashed with the leftist Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Many IMK militants were killed in the early stages of the US military campaign.

Throughout his short but bloody jihadist career Zarqawi fought in Jordan, Afghanistan and Iraq. At an early age he befriended legendary jihadist ideologue Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi becoming his disciple. The two formed jihadist group intent upon overthrowing King Hussein's regime and attacking Israeli interests. Zarqawi participated in the final stages of the Afghan jihad but reportedly did little fighting. Imprisoned for his insurrectional activities in Jordan in 1994 he was amnestied by the king in 1999. Afterward he went to Afghanistan to fight alongside AQ and the Taliban. He forged a controversial relationship with AQ quarreling with OBL establishing a Herat-based terror training camp near the Iranian border.

During his Afghan period, Zarqawi cooperated with Iranian and European Kurds to smuggle foreign fighters to his camp. Given its militant outlook, the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK) was a natural partner for AQ. IMK's network operated in Syria, Iran and Europe enhancing its appeal. After 9/11 AQ central wanted to use the Kurdish enclave in Iraq as an

operating base for future terror operations.[31] Zarqawi's Iranian Kurdish contacts led him to Mullah Krekar's group. Zarqawi began his Iraqi jihad from the mountainous Iraqi Kurdistan relocating to Anbar Provence that became the base of the Sunni resistance movement.

The US invasion prompted disparate groups to coalesce. Baathists and local jihadi groups cooperated with AQ to mount a fierce resistance. Zarqawi set up a foreign fighter network to defeat the US occupation forces. Iraq fused AQ's *far enemy* approach with the *near enemy* perspective of local jihadists. The explosive demographic mix (Shia, Sunni and Kurd) added a powerful ethno-sectarian dimension to the struggle that was carried forth by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi strategy of inviting interconfessional warfare. By 2004 Zarqawi's Jordanian-Kurdish network and Iraqi Anbar operations aligned with AQ waging a brutal insurgent and terror campaign.[32]

AQI's videos featured Zarqawi as a preacher and fighter creating a personality cult and jihadist media star. Zarqawi's documentaries and videos featuring I.E.D attacks, beheadings, suicide bombings and martyrdom statements attracted many jihadists.[33] The Jordanian's anti-Shia stance continues to impress today's militants who are convulsed by the region's sectarian conflicts. Zarqawi's attacks against Shi'ite religious and cultural institutions altered AQ strategy that historically avoided sectarian issues.[34]

Zarqawi needed religious justification for his killing of Muslims. He relied on takfirist doctrines and medieval fatwas excommunicating the Shia as *polytheists* to justify their killing. Syrian medieval scholar Ibn Tamiyya's proclamation that Shi'ites' were *apostates* was a powerful legitimating force for AQI's jihadists.[35] Recalling Shia revolts against legitimate Sunni authority, Taymiyya viewed them as anti-Islamic and he actively called for the annihilation of their leaders. In a maximalist interpretation of Taymiyya's ruling Zarqawi expanded his ruling to the entire Shi'ite population.

By 2006 Zarqawi eclipsed bin Laden popularity among jihadists. This was facilitated by AQI's propaganda videos featuring suicidal jihadist martyrdom operations, car bombs and IED attacks against coalition forces, Iraqi army units, Shi'ite, Christian and Kurdish communities. AQI's videos

evoked a culture of death that dazzled thousands of young men who came to Iraq for *honor* and *glory*.

Despite his ability to attract foreign fighters Zarqawi's extremist vision backfired. His assaults against civilians and his hundreds of car bombs and martyrdom operations targeting Shia institutions and festivals repulsed Muslims eroding AQI's popular legitimacy. Zarqawi's campaign angered Ayman al-Zawahiri who rebuked his anti-Shia strategy in his 2005 letter. A frustrated Zawahiri urged Zarqawi to refocus his attacks against the US and Iraqi forces.

Zawahiri's entreaties were ignored by Zarqawi who continued his grisly attacks against Shia, Kurdish and Christian communities. Even Zarqawi's intellectual mentor Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi was unable to sway the AQI emir from his sectarian strategy.[36] Aware that AQI's non Iraqi leadership and foreign fighters needed to have a broader base Zarqawi incorporated a number of local jihadi groups. Formed in 2006 ISI fused AQI's organization with six Iraqi Islamist organizations hoping to form an embryonic state. Its policies of attacking the Shia population to invite sectarian civil war and state collapse, however, never wavered.

Zarqawi's June 2006 *martyrdom* in a US airstrike had little effect in changing the network's overall strategy. His successor Abu Umar al-Baghdadi followed his mentor's sectarian strategy and tried to establish a jihadist state in Anbar Province, a strategy that invariably brought ISI into conflict with the region's dominant tribal sheiks.[37] While Zarqawi's organization was initially well received by Anbar's tribes, AQI's efforts to supplant their political and economic authority created violent resistance. Brian Fishman argues that AQI's efforts to usurp tribal smuggling routes, its draconian imposition of Sharia in territories it ruled and its assassination campaign aimed at degrading the authority of tribal leaders produced countervailing forces.[38] Capitalizing on ISI's growing unpopularity in the region, US forces aligned with anti-AQ tribal militias to uproot the organizations network.

American arming of Sunni militias degraded ISI's terror infrastructure.[39] Combined with Special Forces assassination of AQ leaders and militants ISI presence in Anbar Province diminished. AQ's dominance in Fallujah and Ramadi fell rapidly. The flow of foreign jihadists, moreover, slowed

through attrition and the loss of popular support. Denied its Anbar base ISI's network receded to heterogeneous communities in northern Iraq where its sectarian strategy continued to resonate. Syria like Iraq suffers from ethno-sectarian stratification that in the past has been a contributing factor in jihadist revolts.

The Syrian MB Revolt 1979–1982

Driving moderates out of the party Hama-based leaders in 1975 altered MB politics toward revolutionary agitation. The Brotherhood's leader Adnan Saadeddine intensified the role of the *Combatant Vanguard*.[40] Assad's 1976 military intervention in neighboring Lebanon to bolster the Christian Phalangists against their Palestinian rivals undermined his regime stoking Sunni anger. Eager to capitalize on the resulting turbulence the Brothers unleashed their jihadist vanguards. Brutal regime countermeasures created a destabilizing cycle of violence. Thousands of Brothers were arrested with many of the party's cadre brutally tortured and killed.[41]

The Baathist crackdown aggravated tensions and sparked the Brotherhood's 1979–1982 rebellion. Revolts were especially strong in cities like Homs, Aleppo and Hama that became centers of Sunni resistance. Most analysts see the revolt beginning with the *Combatant Vanguard*'s 1979 slaughter of eighty-three Alawi military cadets at an Aleppo-based academy. Assad's regime responded by making MB membership a capital offense and Alawi special forces killed over six hundred MB prisoners.[42]

The *Combatant Vanguard* intensified its car bombing and targeted assassination campaign. Hundreds of Baathist party officials were killed as tensions rose in key Sunni cities.[43] Hama-based MB Party officials rebelled, executed Baathist local officials and seized control of the city. By making such a bold stand in Hama, the Brothers had forced Damascus' hand.

Thomas Friedman describes Assad's February 1982 victory over the Brotherhood as enshrining, what he calls, the *Hama rules* or how tribalism and authoritarianism conflate to produce intimidating violence.[44] Assad's slaughter of Hama's population set a terrible precedent consolidating his family's rule and neutralizing any future opposition. Hafez-al-Assad and his Alawi supporters hoped to make Hama an example to deter future rebellions.

The regime unleashed the army to destroy the insurgency. Assad entrusted his brother Rifaat with the city's annihilation. Alawi-led armored divisions quickly encircled the city. The month long bombardment and storming of the city eviscerated the Brotherhood's jihadist ranks.[45] Much of the party *Combatant Vanguard* was destroyed. Entire neighborhoods were raised. Families of Brotherhood members were executed and estimates put the carnage between 10,000 and 25,000 dead.[46] Most of the victims were civilians.

After the Hama massacre the Brotherhood and its *Combatant Vanguard* fractured and the revolt imploded. Abu Mus'ab al-Suri's analysis of the 1982 revolt criticizes the Brotherhood's campaign for failing to rally the Sunni masses.[47] Suri was contemptuous of the MB's Hama last stand and its direct engagement with Assad's army that he concludes poorly suited revolutionary forces who withered before the enemy's superior fire power. The failed 1982 insurrection plays a role in Suri's development of a guerilla war doctrine featuring small bands of fighters.[48]

Comparative Analysis of the Two Insurgencies

The Iraq and Syrian revolts exhibit a cyclical pattern of rapid mobilization, radicalization and eventual destruction. Both groups were able to exploit political dynamics leading to early robust growth. The US invasion invited a power vacuum allowing AQI to capitalize on Sunni grievances. The MB's Combatant Vanguard audacious attacks against Assad's security services and its exploitation of Assad's unpopularity in Syria's Sunni heartland guaranteed rapid early growth.

AQI and the Syrian MB's ideological extremism and brutal sectarian violence, however, contributed to their demise. Dominated by takfirists AQI and the Syrian MB engaged in wanton killing of fellow Muslims and they actively stoked sectarian hatred. Zarqawi's anti-Shia agenda proved controversial enflaming tensions with AQ Central and the Syrian Brothers fixation with Sunni liberation from Alawite oppression narrowed the insurgencies support base.

Equally damaging was AQI's determination to impose its hegemony upon the Sunni insurgency movement and their draconian implementation of Sharia in areas they controlled. The dominance of foreign fighters in

AQI/ISIS leadership ranks proved alienating to Iraqis and Zarqawi's killing deprived the network of a charismatic personality that could galvanize the insurrection. Before Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, ISI had a succession of weak leaders in its post-Zarqawi phase that failed to stem the erosion of support for the movement. Prior to their killing by US security forces ISI leaders Abu Hamza and Abu Umar-al Baghdadi lived in a utopian dream world full of end time scenarios, Islamic emirates and the presence of the Mahdi within ISI's ranks.[49]

The Syrian Brothers similarly were dominated by radicals that purged the organization's moderates leading to the network to its ruin at its Hama last stand. Much of the party's moderate Damascene wing languished in Western exile. Unlike ISI the Syrian Brothers never really recovered as a jihadist network and today they have been replaced by other insurgent actors.

The sectarian-takfirist strategies pursued by these networks produced intraorganizational divisions that weakened their insurgencies making them vulnerable to ruthless state counterterror operations. Under Zarqawi and his successors AQI/ISI alienated other insurgent groups facilitating their defection to US forces who equipped the Awakening Movement with the military and financial tools to assist in the decimation of AQI/ISI Anbar network. Isolated in their Hama redoubt the Brothers were destroyed by Assad's indiscriminate bombing and artillery campaign. Their extremist Islamic visions combined with their use of brutal indiscriminate violence proved counterproductive.

Despite common organizational and ideological trajectories the two insurgencies were profoundly different. AQI/ISI jihadist campaign was more wide spread, destabilizing and resilient than the Syrian Brother's insurrection. Driven out of Anbar Province, ISI relocated to ethno-sectarian mixed areas to continue their terrorist campaign. Though diminished the network was resilient to kill thousands in the US occupation at later stages. For ISI there would be no equivalent to the decisive battle of Hama that effectively ended the Brother's insurrection.

The AQI/ISI network was also more international and its insurgency operated in an environment of sectarian antagonisms and more pronounced Islamist sympathies. Flows of foreign fighters from North Africa and the

Gulf gave Zarqawi's network the martyrs it needed for effective suicide bombings and AQI's global social media galvanized supporters and terrified opponents. The Brothers had little international support and secularism in the 1980s was far more pronounced. This limited the MB's appeal and support. ISI, however, had a sufficient presence allowing it to recover after US troops withdrew.

Analysts that described the ISI network as *defeated* underestimated its resilient character. Driven by the intoxicating vision of restoring the caliphate, ISI jihadists waited for a strategic opening to rejuvenate their network. ISI's resurrection in the Arab Spring turmoil and the sectarian carnage of Syria's brutal civil war is astonishing. The 2012–2014 network recovery speaks tellingly about the power of jihadist movements to remerge when propitious circumstances materialize.

The Arab Spring and ISI's Rebirth

While ISI's post-2011 rejuvenation is striking, the organization was never really defeated. During its decline ISI was resilient enough to mount hundreds of attacks. Despite its diminished infrastructure Zarqawi's acolytes remained faithful to his anti-Shia vision. This commitment continued after the 2010 death of its emir Abu Umar al Baghdadi. ISI's regional network, moreover, was never completely uprooted. Recent events have rejuvenated ISI's organization and its sectarian-takfirist strategy.[50]

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi innovative leadership assisted ISI's revival. He is an anomaly among jihadists. Baghdadi's PhD in Islamic studies and his familial descent from the Prophet's Quraysh tribe reinforce his religious authority.[51] OBL and Ayman al-Zawahiri, for example, had business and medical training. Many jihadists are educated in hard sciences and engineering fields. Will McCants argues Baghdadi's devotion to religious studies was a life time project. Ibrahim Awad Ibrahim al-Badri was raised in a lower middle class Iraqi family.[52] Described as *introspective* and *secretive*, Baghdadi was a soccer devotee and religious student. As a young man his commitment to Islam was never doubted. Gaining a degree in religious studies shortly before the US invasion he helped form Jammat Jaysh Ahi al-Jammah serving as the head of its Sharia committee.[53] The organization was committed to fighting the Americans and securing the

development of a genuine Islamic state. Arrested by US authorities in February 2004 and was held at the Abu Ghraib and Camp Bucca detention centers until his release for good behavior ten months later.

Camp Bucca imprisoned hundreds of jihadi and Baathist insurgents allowing Baghdadi to make invaluable contacts that served to facilitate ISI's revival.[54] Many of those imprisoned at the center would later become key commanders in the network. ISI, moreover, would augment its ranks by attacking prisons liberating thousands of jihadists and Baathist insurgents. American prison authorities remember Baghdadi as quiet but threatening. Reportedly when released he warned a prison official that he would "see him in New York."[55]

Baghdadi resumed his jihad against the Americans joining AQI/ISI organization two years later. He acquired key leadership positions in ISI' Sharia Committee and its senior consultative council. Known as a low key effective manager Baghdadi emerged as a consensus candidate after the killing of ISI leaders Abu Hamza and Abu Umar al-Baghdadi in 2010.[56] Under his leadership Baghdadi transformed ISI into a genuine Iraqi jihadist movement and was able to exploit the power vacuum and intense sectarian cleavages raging in the country after the 2011 US disengagement.

Anthony Cordesman's 2014 Iraqi security study argues that the Sunni insurgency began before the departure of American troops.[57] The disputed 2010 election created sectarian tensions that led a civil war. Despite his party not securing the largest single number of votes, Prime Minister Maliki was able to form a Shia dominated coalition less predisposed to cooperate with Sunni and Kurdish political blocs. Such a development, Cordesman argues, ended the 2010 Erbil agreement that urged consensus among all major political parties.[58]

The Obama administration's failure to achieve a long-term security agreement with Maliki's government and withdraw of American combat troops exacerbated sectarian tensions. During the later stages of their occupation the Americans played a consensus building role among Iraq's major political groups.[59] Absent US pressure Maliki's autocratic leadership drove a wedge between Sunni and Shia communities. His utilization of security services to punish Sunni political opponents increased confessional fears of Shia domination.

Maliki's arrest warrant for Vice President Tarek al-Hashemi on terrorism offenses began an anti-Sunni campaign. Iraqi security forces in December 2013 stormed a Sunni-protest movement camp near Ramadi engendering a full scale rebellion in Anbar Province. Faced with the prospects of mass bloodshed Maliki in February 2014 withdrew his armed forces from key cities.

The resulting security vacuum allowed ISI to establish a base of operation in Ramadi and Fallujah consolidating its grip over the Province. ISI's establishment of a powerbase in Fallujah is an embryonic effort to construct a jihadist state organized along sixteen districts that stretch across Iraq and Syria.[60] With its Syrian network developed the group controversially rebranded itself ISIS.

ISIS forces expanded their control from Iraq's Syrian border to key cities in north and central Iraq laying the foundation for their "emirate." Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi messianic vision of a pure Islamic state has imposed harsh Sharia rule where his militants govern.[61]

The Sunni-jihadist insurgency in Iraq should be seen within a regional context.[62] The Syrian civil war attracted thousands of foreign jihadists rejuvenated ISIS offensive capability.[63] Syria's bloody confessional antagonisms had a synergistic impact on Iraqi violence. AQ's logistical network facilitated by Damascus during Zarqawi's insurgency is now being used against the Syrian and Iraq governments.

Saudi, Kuwaiti and Qatari financial support for foreign fighters, moreover, augments the armed capability of jihadi groups.[64] Both ISIS and AQ's former Syrian affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) benefited from this development. The proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran across the region raised sectarian passions and reignited Zarqawi's jihadist strategy. Syria is the epicenter of this conflict that IS sees as a major opportunity to carry forth Zarqawi's vision.

The Syrian protest offered an unprecedented opportunity for ISI expansion impelling it to relocate his central command to rebel dominated areas close to the Turkish border. Baghdadi aspires to build a transnational Islamic state.[65] Fortified by thousands of international jihadists he wants to use his Iraqi-Syrian emirate to destroy Shia *apostates* and *Zionist-Crusaders*.[66]

Building upon Zarqawi's network, Baghdadi reinforced AQI's logistical and offensive capabilities. His deputy al Abu Muhammad al-Golani developed a network in Syria that quickly became one of the most effective rebel organizations in the country. Created in January 2012 Golani's JN combined martyrdom operations with responsible governance in JN controlled areas. Some observers remarked that the network's charitable operations sought to avoid AQI errors in Anbar hoping to win the hearts and minds of local residents.[67] JN sponsored ice cream eating contests for children and bakeries are offered as evidence of AQI's transformation and adaptive capability.

Propelling this foreign fighter migration were many factors. Some have theological resonance often not discussed in media coverage. The Levant factors in religious prophecy that Sunni and Shi'ite radicals believe to the site of a final battle to destroy evil and consolidate Islamic global conquest.[68] Not surprisingly the Syrian conflict has drawn in vast numbers of committed jihadists across the sectarian divide. Shi'ite militias from Iraq and Hezbollah forces have actively intervened in Syria to support Assad's regime and protect Shi'ite burial sites from the depredations of Sunni-jhadists.[69] Both sides believe a final struggle is underway to save their respective sectarian communities.

The Resurgence of Syrian Jihadism

In *The Syrian Rebellion* Fouad Ajami concludes the 1982 Hama massacre cast a significant shadow over the current rebellion.[70] The massacre of the Brotherhood's stronghold inspired future generations of jihadists to avenge the memory of their slain brothers. Jihadist revolts have a cyclical quality where the quest for revenge propels insurgencies that rise, fall and resurface. Algeria, Iraq, Libya and Egypt have seen cyclical jihadist violence. Egyptian security has battled many jihadist campaigns since the 1970s that they mistakenly believed they had defeated.[71] Dormant since 1983, Syrian jihadism is now ascendant driven by Hama's historical memory.

Today's rebellion, however, is unique. The 1982 revolt had little international connections and was confined to Syria. Regional sectarian conflict thirty years ago was not as pronounced for the current revolt is seen

as a proxy war between Shi'ite Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia.[72] Though fractured between the IS and AQ the global jihadist movement is far larger and more powerful than it was over forty years ago. Its weight on the current conflict is considerable.

Sectarian antagonisms and the expansion of the Sunni Salafi-jihadist movement across the Mideast have invited regional and international powers to intervene in the conflict. The Syrian civil war has witnessed an alignment of forces that pit Assad's army, Iraqi Shi'ite militias, Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) units, Russia and Hezbollah against Gulf Arab states, Turkey, Western supported *moderate* rebel formations and jihadist forces.[73] The 1980s MB revolt in contrast was relatively unassisted by outside powers.

The civil war is also being waged within the context of global networks that recruit, train and arm Sunni-jihadists. AQ's decentralized jihadist confederation postdates the 1982 insurrection preventing the 1980s MB from receiving critical support. Syria's bourgeoning jihadist movement features AQ-affiliated groups competing with the IS.

Mideast states, moreover, have weakened. The Syrian insurrection was driven by the Arab Spring where street protests and rebellion brought down Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan governments debilitating authoritarian regimes across the region. The 2011 protests against Bashar Assad regime came as a surprise to many regional experts.[74] Bashar assumed the Presidency after his father's death in 2000 and analysts hoped that the London trained optometrist would unshackle the regime's authoritarian system. Western governments engaged Bashar hoping that he would renew peace negotiations with Israel. Despite such expectations, Bashar continued to use the Israeli threat to justify his dictatorial rule.

Assad did, however, alter the state's economic direction. He dismantled state control and liberalized key industries, services and agriculture. Privatization disproportionately benefited Assad loyalists and family members. Some analysts believe that the resulting economic inequality and *crony capitalism* contributed to popular resentment that surfaced in Daraa in March 2011 after security forces killed teenagers who sprayed the town's walls with anti-regime graffiti.[75] Hundreds turned out in civil disobedience

to condemn the killings. Many protesters gave tributes to the 1982 martyrs and denounced the Assad family for its violent past.

Throughout 2012 protests escalated as hundreds of thousands demonstrated in Syria's towns, cities and villages. The demonstrations were matched by the severity of the regime repressive actions with *shabiha* militias and secret police brutalizing protesters. Government forces even destroyed mosques that were symbolic centers for the resistance movement.

Initially Assad' regime alternated between repression and conciliation. Assad's abolition of an emergency law that allowed security forces unprecedented power to detain "terrorists" was an effort to placate the opposition. His regime's continued detention of protesters and opponents made a mockery of the law's abolition.

The 2011 protests had a sectarian caste with Sunni towns and cities marked by violent demonstrations. Like early 1980s Homs and Hama were centers of anti-regime resistance and fervor. Homs in particular was devastated by the fighting that victimized many civilians. Much of the city is destroyed, and after a debilitating siege in 2015 was reconquered by regime forces. Fouad Ajami compared Homs to Bosnia's *Sarajevo* a Muslim city repeatedly savaged by Serbian militias some two decades ago.[76]

As Assad's regime killed hundreds of peaceful protestors, which catalyzed into armed rebellion. Unlike Egypt and Tunisia, the Syrian army did not stand aside. The Alawi-dominated officer corps, Special Forces brigades and militias facilitated Bashar's repressive tactics. The military and security apparatus are tied to the regime's survival. Widespread fear of Sunni fundamentalist vengeance has forced Syrian Christian and Muslim minorities to support the regime.

Led by the exiled *Syrian National Council* and military deserters formed the *Free Syrian Army* (FSA), the resistance movement fractured. Hundreds of militias have arisen to wage a military campaign to dislodge the regime. Like Libya, the rebels are a loose amalgamation of militias and vigilante groups.[77] These groups often quarrel and clash. Kurdish and Syrian nationalists have fought along the Turkish border to control territory and smuggling roots. The rapid *Islamization* of the revolt has furthermore intensified centrifugal dynamics.

Despite obstacles rebels conquered most of rural Syria by March of 2013 as the regime battled rebels in Damascus and Aleppo. Fighting in these cites illustrates the regime's difficult position. Syrian jihadists and foreign fighters from Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Europe joined opposition forces. What began as a secular uprising became an Islamist-dominated revolution punctuated by AQ-affiliated suicide operations and car bombings. Jihadists are a critical part of the resistance movement. Among rebel forces, the JN unleashed spectacular suicide operations against the regime's forces.

Created in January 2012 JN used foreign fighters for suicide operations.[78] The group's coordinated car bomb and *martyrdom* operations have killed thousands with many of its activities posted on Islamist web sites. JN has executed Baathist loyalists, Alawi civilians and soldiers. With the ability to field tens of thousands of combatants, JN has emerged as a key player in the insurgency.[79] Its leader Abu Muhammad al-Golani was part of AQI and a deputy in that organization.

JN's growth in Syria was facilitated by the ISI. In April 2013 ISI leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced that JN was a territorial extension of his network (renamed Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham—ISIS). Baghdadi's proposed merger was rejected by JN leader Abu Muhammad al-Golani. Faced with a conflict between two AQ affiliates the organization's emir Ayman al-Zawahiri sided with JN and urged ISIS to consolidate its Iraqi operations.

AQ's Syrian representative Abu Khalid al-Suri failed to broker a ceasefire between contending jihadists. Frustrated by ISIS belligerence, Ayman al-Zawahiri broke all organizational and ideological connections to ISIS.[80] Zawahiri's expulsion of the ISIS capstones a decade long conflict between AQ central and its recalcitrant Iraqi branch. ISIS responded to its expulsion by killing AQ's Syrian representative and Ahrar al-Sham leader Abu Khalid al-Suri in a February 22, 2014, *martyrdom* operation.[81] Baghdadi's organization gave JN five days to end their attacks against fellow ISI jihadists or face *eradication*.[82] The two groups continue to clash.

Baghdadi's rejection of Zawahiri's decision began a path of ISIS renegade behavior sowing jihadist infighting. Its formation of its eastern Syrian came at the expense of moderate and Islamist groups and the groups' administrative center in Raqqa, Syria, was marketed as ISIS's governance

blueprint for its *caliphate*. The city became notorious for its religious extremism, grisly executions and brutal implementation of Sharia law.

With ISIS expulsion from AQ JN became Zawahiri's official Syrian affiliate.[83] ISIS evolved into the IS whose proto-jihadist state in Western Iraq and Eastern Syria has prompted unprecedented disunity in the jihadist world. Along with the Abdullah Azzam Brigade, Fatah al-Islam, Ahrar al-Sham, Chechen and Pakistani militant organizations, JN hoped to overthrow the regime and replace it with a Sharia state. Jihadist ascendance in the Syrian rebel movement is not surprising. Syria was a logistical network for the Iraqi resistance movement after the 2003 US invasion.[84] The Assad regime smuggled foreign fighters into Iraq and assisted AQI's development of a Syrian logistical infrastructure. The regime is now on the receiving end of a network that it helped to develop.

As the war's virulence and death toll intensified, the rebel movement became more extremist, fractured and sectarian. External interventions by Russia, IRGC, Hezbollah and Iraqi Shia militias have, moreover, assisted the Assad regimes capacity to resist the revolt. The flow of Qatari, Kuwaiti and Saudi money and weapons to extremist jihadi organizations amplifies this radicalization.[85] Western nation's reluctance to militarily intercede in Syria has exacerbated the violence and reinforced the growing role of jihadist organizations. The jihadists, however, are a dysfunctional divided lot.

Formed in 2013 the Islamic Front consolidated forty rebel groups into a unified command structure to combat the regime and constrain rebel radicalization.[86] ISIS's January 2014 killing of a mediator, its numerous clashes with rebel groups and brutalization of local communities sparked a Syrian Revolutionary Front—FSA offensive against ISIS positions in Aleppo, Homs and Raqqa. Backed by Turkey and Gulf Arab states moderate forces drove ISIS units from their Aleppo headquarters. Rebel infighting killed over three thousand fighters in two months.[87]

ISIS snatched territories from other militias and rebel groups. Baghdadi's brigades have clashed with FSA, Kurdish and other rebel groups. *Human Rights Watch* report that IS operates detention centers where torture and summary executions are common.[88] In late 2013 ISIS brigades massacred

hundreds living in Alawi villages in the Latakia coastal region and both have expropriated FSA territory and arms depots.[89]

Fearing that arms sent to moderate rebels could be appropriated by AQ affiliates Western nation's suspended shipments of light arms and supplies. Gulf Arab governments and Turkey also became fearful of extremists within the rebel movement and sought to construct a *moderate* Islamist alternative to JN and ISIS.

Rebel infighting bolstered the Assad's regime. The Syrian army-Hezbollah's summer 2013 offensive dislodged rebel forces from Qusayr and secured supply lines linking Damascus, Aleppo and coastal Latakia.[90] Government forces and Hezbollah militants are fighting rebel groups in the mountainous Qalamoun region as Damascus seeks to eradicate opposition supply routes along the Lebanese border. Iran, Hezbollah and Russia, furthermore, have supplied Assad's regime with critical weapons and supplies to maintain offensive operations.[91]

Despite such assistance the regime security forces experienced severe manpower shortages. By summer 2015 rebel forces were making advances in Latakia, Idlib and Hama provinces. Hoping to prevent the regime's deterioration Russia deployed its armed forces in Syria. With two thousand support personnel and its construction of an air base Moscow became an active participant in Syria's civil war.[92] By September 2015 Russia dramatically increased its military involvement in Syria by launching air strikes against Syrian rebels fighting Assad's regime. Syria and Russia have had a strategic military and economic relationship dating back to the Cold War.

Fearing that Assad's defeat by rebel forces would jeopardize its Tartus naval base on Syria's coast, Russian intervention has facilitated the regime's survival. Since its entry into the civil war hundreds of airstrikes have been targeted anti-Assad rebel helping the regime in retaking hundreds of towns and villages near Aleppo and Latakia. The majority of Russian bombs dropped have been against Western-backed *moderate* rebels. The *Institute for the Study of War* reports that 90 percent of Russia's air strikes are concentrated in northwestern Syria's outside areas controlled by IS and JN.[93] Government forces in 2016 encircled rebels in Aleppo forcing a

negotiated withdraw of their remaining troops. The recapture of Aleppo proved to be a critical turning point in the civil war.

Assisted by Hezbollah, IRGC units and Iraqi, Afghan and Pakistani Shi'ite militias Assad's regime has strengthened. Damascus has also ensured its survival through merciless brutality. Government forces eviscerated rebel-supported neighborhoods in Aleppo killing thousands of civilians by dropping barrel bombs packed with gasoline and nails. The war has featured the use of chemical weapons that have killed thousands. Hama and Darayya were besieged towns with rebels forced by starvation permitted to withdraw. By 2017 over 250,000 people have died in the civil war and eleven million have been displaced. The government's offensive to create a corridor linking Damascus, Aleppo and Alawi northern coastal bastions has largely succeeded.

Though possible in 2015 the Syrian regime's collapse is now unlikely. Jihadist efforts to create a proto state in Idlib Province have intensified efforts to dislodge them. Though anti-Assad forces have received some external support the assistance has been insufficient. Jihadist participation in the insurgency, moreover, has limited the amount of weapons that outside powers are willing to provide. The formation of Jaysh al-Fatah [Army of Conquest] in 2015 created a ten-group jihadist alliance dominated by JN and Ahrar al-Sham. Despite this confederation's battlefield victories in Idlib Province many rebel groups were reluctant to join an organization tied to AQ. In June 2016 Islamist forces reorganized when JN *decoupled* from AQ to form Jabhat Fatah al-Sham [The Levant Conquest Front].[94] Done with AQ's consent, the *disassociation* was justified to unify Islamist ranks permitting more effective military operations. JN's affiliation with AQ was a source of tension among jihadist forces.

Ahrar al-Sham argued for JN to break its link with AQ for Gulf Arabs and the Turks were reticent to contribute to any AQ-affiliated alliance.[95] Most analysts doubt the sincerity of the *de-coupling* for it could be a ruse for clandestine AQ control of the Levant Conquest Front. Viewing the need for jihadist unity Ayman al-Zawahiri appeared to support JN's efforts to make the break and the spit was coordinated with AQ commander Ahmed Salameh Mabrouk who *blessed* the Levant Conquest Front's creation.[96]

Charles Lister argues AQ's post-Arab Spring strategy involve the nestling of its militants into insurgent forces in an attempt to *guide* the revolution and influence the development of a jihadist state.[97] Zawahiri's 2013 *general guideline* for conducting jihad calls for AQ's cooperation with local insurgents.[98] Despite efforts to unify jihadist ranks alliances have proved illusory.

The fight against the Assad regime has been weakened by infighting between Ahrar al-Sham and JN that in 2017 forced yet another AQ-*affiliated* rebranding. Few believe that this new jihadist configuration Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) will unify jihadist ranks. What is clear is that ISI pursued a radically different approach.

The IS Recasts Iraqi and Syrian Jihadism

Sectarian conflicts in Syria and Iraq fortified ISI's transnational network. By spring 2014 ISI's *Breaking the Walls* and *Soldiers of Harvest* terror campaigns had freed scores of jihadist prisoners and killed enough Iraqi security forces that the network was able to capture many Sunni towns and cities.[99]

Expanding its operations into Syria, ISIS has attracted tens of thousands of foreign jihadists eager to fight against the Alawi dominated government and its Iranian and Hezbollah allies. Baghdadi's IS control territory in northeastern Syria along the Turkish and Iraqi borders and its draconian imposition of Sharia law is celebrated by the organization's media operations.

ISI reinforcement of preexisting connections in Syria bore considerable progress. This enabled the network to recruit an unprecedented number of fighters to its Syrian-Iraqi operations. Richard Barrett reports up to 45,000 fighters have migrated to Syria with jihadists from Arab Gulf States, North Africa, Europe and the Caucasus predominating.[100]

International jihadists played a key role in the ISIS offensive capability. Varying estimates put the number of jihadists in Syria who migrated to the Iraqi theater from six to eleven thousand. Given their large Muslim diaspora populations Britain and France are that as more fighters return it will experience more attacks like those in Paris and Brussels. Returning fighters

from the Afghan jihad produced vicious Islamist terror campaigns in Algeria, Libya and Egypt that all ended in failure.

Fortified by its Syrian network, ISIS stormed into western Iraq seizing Mosul and most of Anbar Province. ISIS's blitzkrieg demoralized the Iraqi army that either surrendered or retreated. Entire Iraqi army divisions melted away with little resistance before the jihadist onslaught. Iraq's second largest city Mosul fell uncontested to ISIS militants. This left ISIS with a vast arsenal of American weapons. ISIS celebrated its victory by slaughtering over 1,200 Shi'ite Iraqi Army prisoners at Camp Speicher, a celebratory slaughter of military prisoners not seen since the Rape of Nanking.[101]

ISI spokesperson Muhammad al-Adnani in late June 2014 announced the caliphate's formation, now rebranded the IS. In the fourth issue of the *Islamic State Report* ISIS foot soldiers announced the abolition of the Sykes-Picot colonial-era borders and confidently predicted the caliphate's predestined expansion.[102] ISIS's transnational aspirations were strengthened by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi address at Mosul's Grand Mosque. His July 5, 2014, sermon called for the loyalty of the world's Muslims and he demanded their *hijrah* [emigration] to his caliphate. Renamed Caliph Ibrahim, Baghdadi's address divides the world into heavenly and devilish realms and suggests the inevitability of an apocalyptic struggle where Islam destroys its enemies.[103]

Baghdadi's proclamation of IS's caliphate centric strategy is a historic event. The IS acted as a magnet for unprecedented foreign fighter migrations (some 40,000 fighters) and serves as the embodiment of millenarian jihadist aspirations.[104] This was magnified by IS' online Twitter campaigns that have generated significant mass support.[105] Some of these online participants have headed Baghdadi's call for *hijrah*, while others have committed acts of terrorism in their home countries. With attacks by IS sympathizers in Brussels, Copenhagen, New York, Sydney, Paris, Suisse, San Bernadino, Nice and Garland, and with thirty provinces worldwide the caliphate is a significant threat to the international liberal order The network's external operations in November 2015 struck in the Sinai, Beirut, Yemen and Paris killing hundreds. The Paris attack struck in multiple

locations across the city killing one hundred and thirty people and represents the dangers posed by IS's returning foreign fighters.

ISIS's June 2014 Mosul conquest threatened a deep advance into Iraqi Kurdistan and Baghdad's encirclement. IS's success impelled a risk-averse Obama administration into action. IS's conquests were partially a consequence of the administration's post-2011 neglect. After the American withdrawal jihadist military advancement elicited no response from the Obama administration. Rejecting requests from the Iraqi government to target ISI's network, the administration, never less, continued to support Baghdad as it brutalized its Sunni political opponents and disbanded the Anbar based Sons of Iraq militias the only effective firewall to prevent ISI's revival in Sunni communities.[106]

IS was able to seize power so rapidly because its *military-terror* campaigns effectively shattered the psychological will of Iraqi security forces. Despite outnumbering jihadist forces from ten to one most Shia recruits were reluctant to fight and die to secure Sunni areas. Much of the Iraqi officer corps fled their commands inviting the army's effective collapse. The rapidity of IS seizure of power is also a consequence of its geopolitical and military doctrine.

IS's Two Rivers Strategy and Total War Doctrine

When the US-led military campaign began in August 2014 IS occupied Sunni areas in Iraq and Syria along river tributaries.[107] This geopolitical development gave the jihadist proto state a strategic advantage against its opponents. IS facilitated its state-building project by seizing dams, reservoirs, oil wells, grain bins, gas lines and electricity generating plants. By controlling critical infrastructure the IS generated financial resources, recruits loyalists and punishes its enemies. Water, food, electricity were used as weapons of war. The IS resorted to flooding its adversaries to facilitate the advance of jihadist forces.

The configuration of IS's reign along the Tigris and Euphrates river basins allowed the caliphate to wage *total war* against all who refused to swear fidelity to its network. Sunni tribes that rebelled against the IS's reign were annihilated.[108] Mostly, however, tribal engagement and reconciliation with Sunni tribes allowed the caliphate to secure its territorial control. Initially IS

rule in Sunni areas was well received by most residents who benefited from increased security.[109] Other groups were not so fortunate.

Jihadist forces brutalized Christian and Yazidi communities. IS' ethno-sectarian cleansing campaign in northern Iraq obliterated many Yazidi communities. Jihadist brutality was driven by their belief that the Yazidis are *devil worshipers* because of their devotion of a fallen angel as their protector. Thousands were slaughtered and enslaved. *Dabiq Five* defends the sexual enslavement of Yazidi women as "war booty" consistent with medieval Islamic practices.[110] A 2016 United Nations report on IS ethnic cleansing of Yazidi documents that the jihadists displaced 380,000 people, massacred over 5,000 and kidnapped some 3,500 women.[111] Though most Christians fled before the jihadist military conquests, those few who remained were forced to convert or pay monetary tribute. Many churches and monasteries were destroyed. Shia mosques and Sufi shrines were razed.

IS's war strategy facilitated its strategic objective to *remain* and *expand*.[112] The IS's military and propaganda activities had functional qualities. Among these are: (1) a unity of purpose and concentration of force; (2) the use of hybrid warfare mixing asymmetric and conventional techniques; (3) a divide, conquer and diversion strategy that neutralizes its opponents offensive capabilities; (4) total commitment, brutality and risk maximization; (5) operational dexterity across different battlefields; and (6) the synchronization of media and military policy. These qualities have allowed it to survive an international military campaign waged by some sixty nations against its jihadist state for three years.

The caliphate was unique in the jihadist world for it lacks organizational and ideological fissures. A contrast with AQ is illustrative. Since the 2001 loss of its Taliban protected sanctuary, its network has fractured and its affiliates have acted against its parent's wishes. The near enemy, sectarian and takfirist behavior of AQ in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al Shabaab and even AQAP were criticized by bin Laden in his Abbottabad correspondence.[113] By 2011 AQ's *far enemy* strategy was in shambles with only AQAP even interested in attacking the US homeland.

The ISI caliphate centric strategy created strains within AQ's network. Despite these tensions it was not until February 2014 that AQ expelled ISIS for its failure to heed Zawahiri's decree to abandon its Syrian operations.

Unique among AQ's network ISIS progenitor AQI never experienced severe divisions and the network has had a stable command structure.[114]

The IS's hierarchical order had an emir/Caliph, a Shura policy-making council, two media divisions, separate Iraqi and Syrian commanders and a leadership structure for all of its thirty provinces.[115] United by a barbaric sectarian and takfirist agenda IS was fully committed to its program tying resources to its goals.

Fragmented between Kurdish Peshmerga, the Iraqi army and Sunni tribal forces, no single actor directed offensive capability against the caliphate. Until 2016 this inhibited the concentration of force needed to break the IS. Whenever its opponents advanced, IS opened another front to divert its opponent's resources.

The caliphate's forces were skilled at *hybrid warfare* and had an operational dexterity that its opponents often lacked. Employing varied attacks IS made dramatic advances throughout 2014–2015 including capturing Mosul and occupying Ramadi. The latter is a good example. With its forces shielded by a sand storm ISIS unleashed dozens of massive tanker truck bombs and an infantry charge right out of the movie *Road Warrior*.[116] Denied air support due to weather and not equipped with enough anti-tank missiles to derail the assault, the Iraqi army retreated. This outcome was reminiscent of the security forces abandonment of Mosul that allowed ISIS to capture vast amounts of US supplied weapons.

IS military campaigns featured suicide bombers, improvised explosive devices, human wave attacks and vehicular bombs and its slaughtering of its opponents represent a commitment lacking in its numerically superior adversaries.[117] The caliphate also buttressed its position in Libya and Egypt. This insures that defeat in one theater does not portend the movement's demise.

Its military operations were promoted by propaganda campaigns that attracted recruits and terrorized its enemies. Reports of battlefield achievements, grisly execution videos, depiction of the caliphate's charitable activities, the destruction of pagan architectural sites and appeals for *hijrah* until 2016 facilitated its *remaining* and *expanding* strategy.[118] Packaged as fulfilling ISIS's *prophetic destiny* this media campaign attracted fanatics committed to its agenda. Thousands of videos are posed

by hundreds of ISIS Twitter accounts. The propaganda recruited foreign fighters (including some three to four thousand Europeans) allowed it to utilize these militants to attacks in their home countries.[119]

ISIS brilliantly marketed itself. Filmed in Palmyra's ruins one ISIS video features child executioners killing Syrian soldiers.[120] Presented in grand operatic style the film suggested that the future generations guarantee that caliphate's survival and imperial glory awaits these *cubs* of the IS. By destroying some of Palmyra's pagan monuments IS suggested that it shapes the future by destroying the past.

Paradoxically the same forces (tactical brutality and ideological extremism) that contributed to IS's successful state-building project would play a role in its subsequent demise. Pursuing a *total war* doctrine raises the number of enemies that one has to fight who faced with IS's merciless brutality are forced to unite. By 2017 Iraqi forces drove IS from most of the area it had conquered in its 2014 campaign while Assad's forces and Kurdish militias supported by the United States liberated much of Syria from IS control.

After nearly four years of strategic bombing by international powers and assaults by regional opponents the IS's defenses withered. Ramadi, Fallujah, Mosul and Palmyra were recaptured and coalitional security forces drove IS from Raqqa. By June 2017 the IS lost 60 percent of its territory and 80 percent of its revenue.[121] Despite IS's operational dexterity the strain of fighting multiple actors eroded its control over territory, degraded its fighting force and diminished its finances.

The disintegration of the IS's governing structure speaks volumes about the self-destructive nature of jihadi states. Muhammad Hafez, for example, argues that the IS's demise was driven by its fratricidal maximalist ideology that alienated potential supporters and unified opponents.[122]

Extremism Breeds Destruction: The IS Collapses

The erosion of IS's jihadist state is consistent with past extremist revolts where brutal violence and religious fanaticism bred popular disillusion and overwhelming external resistance. Though the caliphate strived to avoid the errors of its AQI progenitor, IS's barbaric treatment of its enemies impelled fierce resistance. Its monopolization of authority in Sunni areas came at the

expense of other insurgent groups and tribes. The Baathist Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al-Naqshabrani (JRTN) that cooperated with ISI was brutally liquidated after the caliphate formation.[123] Sunni tribes in Iraq and Syria that resisted IS encroachment were annihilated. By declaring *total war* against all unaligned with its organization, popular support is too narrow to sustain its ambitious state-building project.

The loss of popular support was exacerbated by the coalition's sustained air campaign targeting the caliphate's military positions and finances. US military authorities estimated that forty-five thousand IS fighters were killed in the war. Precision air strikes targeted IS oil wells, natural gas facilities, transport tankers and banks crippling the caliphate financial base. By some estimates revenue from oil sales went down by some two-thirds.[124] Buttressed by five thousand US military advisers and arms shipments, Iraqi security forces recovered offensive capability. Iraq's vaunted Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) bore the brunt of the fighting against IS forces and led the operation to conquer Mosul.[125]

The caliphate's military reversals in 2016–2017 were notable. Even such historic Sunni strongholds like Fallujah and Ramadi fell to opposition forces. The eight month battle to recapture Mosul from IS was a critical turning point in the war. By July 2017 the IS lost thousands of fighters in its failed bid to defend the city.[126]

Many of its militants heeded Baghdadi's call to fight to the death for the city was the site for the caliphate's official proclamation.[127] Its loss was a significant strategic and psychological blow.

Following Mosul's fall to Iraqi government forces IS defensive position across Iraq and Syria collapsed rapidly in places like Tal Afar and Mayadin. In some measure IS's failure to fight for its remaining strongholds was part of a calculated strategy to revert back to terrorism and insurgency by conserving its manpower.[128]

IS's grip over Raqqa ended by October 2017 after a four month battle. The aggregate weight of Kurdish, state and international forces aligned against the caliphate was impossible to resist.

With diminished resources to pay fighters and maintain services, IS's administration was forced to raise taxation further eroding its support. Efforts by states to restrict foreign fighters going to Iraq/Syria and tighter

controls over the Turkish border denied the caliphate the means to replenish its shrinking forces. IS, however, has responded vigorously to these challenges. Its demise is not guaranteed.

Return to Terrorism and Insurgency

Faced with battlefield losses IS has crafted a tripartite war strategy to retaliate against its enemies. First, it has increased the tempo of its external terror operations across the world. Targeting Europe and North America is prioritized through inspiring their supporters in the West. In 2017 alone IS supporters attacked in London, Manchester, Stockholm, New York and Barcelona. This strategy of terror retaliation against the West will be explored in chapter 7. Second, it has sought to sow divisions among its antagonists to weaken them. IS' targeting of Turkey and the Kurds was designed to accelerate conflict between Ankara, the PKK and its YPG Syrian branch. Thirdly, IS's social messaging promises to combat coalition and apostate forces through asymmetric guerrilla and terrorist warfare.[129]

Confronted by multiple adversaries with superior firepower the IS cannot resort to conventional warfare. A lesson learned bitterly when it lost thousands of its soldiers to US-directed air strikes in the failed 2014 effort to take Kobane from Kurdish forces. Near the end of his life IS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani hinted that IS battlefield defeats would cause it to revert to insurgency and terrorism guaranteeing the movements' survival. In his last audio address in May 2016 Adnani declared:

> Would you be victorious if you kill ash-Shishani, Abu Bakr, Abu Zayd, or Abum Amir? No! Indeed victory is the defeat of one's opponent. Or do you, O America, consider defeat to be the loss of a city or the loss of land? Were we defeated when we lost cities in Iraq and were in the desert without any city or land? And would we be defeated and you victorious if you were to take Mosul or Sirte or Raqqah or even take all of the cities and we were to return to our initial condition? Certainly not! True defeat is the loss of willpower and the desire to fight.[130]

Though IS has lost its territorial governance its capacity to survive as an insurgent movement exploiting Sunni grievances in Iraq and Syria is probable. In areas like Diyala Province it has resorted to guerilla warfare

and terrorism. The intra-confessional conflicts that drive the Syrian and Iraqi civil wars show little sign of abating. The caliphate's forces have always utilized asymmetric warfare. Its legions of suicide bombers and massive production of improvised explosive devices continue to sow havoc and provoke significant casualties.

Complicating the international coalitions' stabilization of areas liberated from IS is fragmentation of forces and rival agendas of IS's opponents. The campaign to take Mosul was constrained by the competing priorities of the Iraqi army, Sunni tribal allies, Iranian backed Shia militias and Kurdish Peshmerga. Harmonizing and coordinating this patchwork of forces was challenging and explains why it took so long to retake most of the city.

Syria was more problematic. Though the US had success supporting the Syrian Democratic Front (SDF) YPG dominance in the coalition engenders Arab and Turkish opposition. The SDF's seizure of Manbij from IS deprived the caliphate a key foreign fighter transit point.

The town's proximity to the Turkish border, however, forced Ankara to intervene using its army and FSA allies to drive the Kurds to the Euphrates. The United States support for the Turkish operation to liberate Jarablus from IS complicated American-Kurdish military cooperation. After a four month battle Raqqa fell to US supported SDF forces.

Shortly after Raqqa's fall IS abandoned many of its Syrian strongholds along the Euphrates Valley preparing for what is likely to be future guerrilla operations. Syria remains a partitioned country badly stratified by sectarian and ethnic fissures that can be exploited by a future Sunni fundamentalist movement.

The IS may survive by relying more on its external affiliates to wage a global terror insurgency. *Dabiq*'s "Remaining and Expanding" issue documents pledges of IS support from Algerian, Egyptian, Yemeni and Saudi jihadists.[131] These external provinces serve as a rear guard against territorial losses in Syria and Iraq. Jacob Zenn argues that IS' Libyan operations in the Sahel could intensify its organizational ties with its IS of West Africa (ISWA) Nigerian affiliate.[132]

With over ten wilaya stretched across North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia IS provinces are strongest in Egypt and Libya. The IS's

development of its Egyptian and Libyan regional branches has reinvigorated the jihadist insurgencies in these countries.

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Chapter 5

The Islamic State's Reorientation of Jihad in Egypt and Libya

Egypt and Libya are struggling to combat Islamist insurgent violence. Today's jihadist activity is not unprecedented. Though previous Islamic revolutionary movements were defeated by Egyptian and Libyan security forces, extremist violence today is propelled by the Arab Spring's instability. The IS's presence in these countries, furthermore, complicates an already precarious security context.

Persistent jihadist terror in these nations prompts several questions. First, will today's insurgent campaigns fail like their *predecessors*? Second, do past jihadist insurgencies rise, radicalize, fall and reemerge cyclically? Third, has the IS changed jihadist terror campaigns in these countries and is IS poised to repeat patterns that historically has inhibited jihadist success? Answering these queries is critical. Egypt and Libya are the strongest of IS provinces outside its Iraqi-Syrian base. Egypt's Ansar al-Jerusalem's November 2014 pledge of support for IS and the caliphate's declaration of a Libyan emirate make these countries key battle zones in the fight against international jihadism. Formerly ruling in Sirte, Libya's IS *Wilayat Tarabulus* aspired to impose Sharia governance over the territory it controls.[1]

Renewed terrorist violence comes after optimism that jihadism had been *defeated*. Islamist resurgence represents a distressing cycle where *defeated* jihadist organizations exploit new opportunities and renew their challenge to state security. The political and social conditions for Islamic extremist expansion in Egypt and Libya are propitious. IS consequently had an opportunity to succeed where past movements failed.

This chapter examines the violent Islamist movements in Egypt and Libya since the 1980s and assesses their future evolution. It has three parts. First, the Egyptian and Libyan Islamic extremist groups are sketched and their respective views of state and society are developed. Second, it evaluates failed past rebellions concentrating on the cyclical character of jihadi violence and the Arab Spring's impact in resuscitating Islamist insurgency. Third, it analyzes how the IS's network has changed terrorist warfare in these countries.

EGYPTIAN AND LIBYAN ISLAMIST VIEWS OF STATE AND SOCIETY

Egypt

Any examination of Egyptian jihadism is unthinkable without analyzing the MB's development and how its beliefs affect jihadi revolutionary strategy.[2] The MB's leader Hasan al-Banna created the organization in 1929 conceiving it as anti-colonial Islamist party. He was instrumental in developing the Brotherhood's ideology. Banna blamed European secular influence and Islamic theological innovations [*bid'ah*] within Muslim society for its decline.

Bana's worldview emphasized: (1) the secular state's incongruity with Muslim society; (2) Western influence in Muslim society is dysfunctional altering Islamic civilization rightful *divine path;* and (3) the restoration of Muslim dominance could be achieved by returning to a modernized version of seventh-century Islamic state and society.[3] Only when Muslim society restored Sharia law and practices could cultural, economic and political advances in Egyptian society proceed. Such a development would make Egyptian society to maximize its social, political and economic potential.

The Brotherhood created a network of mosques and social service centers and its organization grew dramatically across Egypt. It joined with other nationalists groups in opposing King Farouk's administration that they viewed a proxy for British imperialism. The Brotherhood joined with the Arab nationalist movement in opposition to a Zionist state and actively supported the Palestinian cause. Thousands of Egyptian MB volunteers joined with Arab forces with Palestinian fighters against Zionists in the

1947–1948 war. Banna called for jihad against the Zionists and revolt against Farouk's regime.

With its rapid growth, violent agenda and vast social infrastructure network, the Brothers were seen by Cairo as a destabilizing force. Farouk's government disbanded the MB in 1948 driving it underground. Banna was assassinated a year later. Though it is unclear who killed him, immediate suspicion fell upon the regime.

Young nationalist officers in the army seized power in 1952 converting Egypt into a pan-Arabist secular authoritarian regime. Dominated by Gamal Abdul Nasser, the regime instituted land reform and socialized the economy. The Brotherhood's opposition to the regime's secular agenda transformed it into a clandestine terror network that in 1954 unsuccessfully tried to assassinate Nasser.[4]

The Egyptian state repressed the Islamist movement. As the Brotherhood evolved, its radicalism strengthened. MB's most famous theorist Sayyid Qutb developed doctrines embracing a totalitarian Islamist state predicated upon the *cleansing* of pernicious Western influence and repeal theological innovations [bid'ah] that are inconsistent with Islam's *founding principles*.

The Egyptian writer believed that Islam's acculturation of Western values was the cause of Muslim backwardness and a return to genuine Sharia rule was a precondition for Islamic resurgence. Central to Qutb's argument was that Islam's absorption of Greek, Persian and European influences and their impact in changing theological interpretation diverted the religion from its natural divine path. Qutb believed foreign acculturation and theological deviance had produced a state of ignorance of divine truth or *jahilliyyah* in Muslim society.[5]

Such was the depth of this ignorance that he viewed only a minority of Muslims had an appropriate understanding of Islam. These select few he argued could serve as a revolutionary vanguard. Qutb assisted the formation of terrorist network within the Brotherhood organization committed to the overthrow of Nasser's *apostate* regime. An advocate of religious preaching [*dawa*] Qutb hoped the masses could learn be converted to *true Islam* and directed by the Brotherhood's revolutionary vanguard to rebel against Nasser's regime.

His ideas inspired jihadists from OBL to Ayman al-Zawahiri to Abu Musab Zarqawi. Qutb's 1966 hanging by Nasser's state and subsequent *martyrdom* consolidates his revered status for jihadists. His theological interpretations endured long after his death. Qutb's impact was especially pronounced in Egypt and it inspired a number of radical splinter groups disenchanted with the MB's 1970s reconciliation with the Egyptian state.

Qutb's writings inspired Egyptians Muhammad Faraj and AQ's emir Ayman al-Zawahiri. Faraj's *The Neglected Duty* emphasized the importance of attacking the apostate *near enemy* as a precondition to propel the Muslim world toward a genuine Islamic society.[6] Waging jihad, Faraj reasoned, was a mandatory religious obligation requiring extreme action. Like Qutb, Faraj had contempt for Egypt's religious establishment whom he saw as legitimating the regime. *The Neglected Duty* urged the overthrown of secular regimes as a precondition to liberate Jerusalem.

Enraged by President Anwar al-Sadat's signing of the Camp David Accords, *Tanzim wal Jihad* (Unity and Jihad) and *Takfir wal Hijira* (Excommunication and Exile) hoped to seize power. Faraj's Unity and Jihad group participated in October 1981 assassination of Anwar Sadat and hoped the killing would trigger mass rebellion. Instead, Sadat's successor Hosni Mubarak unleashed security forces crushing the group. Faraj would achieve *martyrdom* when convicted for treason and executed. Thousands of the organization's militants were imprisoned.

Ayman al-Zawahiri's memoirs *Bitter Harvest* venerates Faraj contributions and savages the MB for renouncing jihad and reconciling with the Egyptian state. Tawid al Jihad's successors Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman's Islamic Group (IG) and Ayman al-Zawahiri's EIJ assassinated political leaders, killed Christians, bombed state offices and tourist centers. Their attacks killed thousands and disrupted the economy. These groups set the stage for later more violent campaigns.

Libyan Islamism

Historically, Libya has been a religiously conservative society where Muamar Qaddafi's predecessor King Idris accorded mosques and Muslim charitable trusts' considerable autonomy. The MB Libyan branch date back to 1949 and Islamism is especially strong in the east. Led by Colonel

Muamar Qaddafi the 1969 military coup dramatically challenged Libyan social conservatism.[7] Espousing a pan-Arab socialist ideology Qaddafi's regime has hostile to Islamist groups and institutions. Qaddafi's nationalization of religious trusts enraged Muslim fundamentalists.

As Qaddafi's regime matured in the 1970s, Libya's revolutionary state embraced religious values promulgating *third universal way* of Islamic socialism.[8] In his *Green Book*, Qaddafi sought a synthesis between Islam and socialism. Qaddafi's creation of decentralized councils dismembered bureaucratic institutions and his regime's socialization of the economy produced economic shortages and upheaval.[9]

Qaddafi's promotion of *Islamic socialism* was met with resistance by religious fundamentalists. They considered his *third universal way* a heretical innovation that debased Islam.[10] With Libya's economic crisis worsening and the regime popularity fading political Islamism surged. Islamist revival was propelled by larger external forces especially mujahidin success in the 1980s Afghan war and the spread of Saudi-financed Wahhabi institutions and fundamentalist clerics across the Muslim world.

Hundreds of Libyans joined the ranks of Islamist fighters during the Afghan jihad. Armed with combat experience they returned home to challenge what they considered an *apostate* regime. The most powerful of these Islamist revolutionary forces was the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG).[11] While the jihadist network was officially formed in October 1995 its roots date back to the early 1980s. It was only after the Afghan jihad and return of trained armed fighters did the LIFG present a serious challenge to the regime.

The LIFG's original founder Awatha al-Zuwawi networked with jihadi groups in Afghanistan and in 1986 spent a few weeks there.[12] During his time in Afghanistan he was exposed to the work of Abdullah Azzam who espoused obligatory jihad against foreign troops on Muslim soil. Emboldened by the effectiveness of Libyan fighters in Afghanistan the LIFG was formed mirroring jihadist campaigns in Egypt and Algeria. The LIFG networked with fellow jihadists in these countries reinforced by the connection made with Egyptian and Algerian fighters in Afghanistan and Sudan.[13]

Khartoum's Islamist revolutionary regime in the early 1990s assisted many jihadi groups including the LIFG reinforcing Libyan exposure to bin Laden's nascent terrorist organization that had taken refuge in the Sudan. Some LIFG members like Abu Laith al-Libi and Abu Yahya al-Libi would latter emerge as important commanders in bin Laden's network.[14]

The LIFG's ideological message condemned Qaddafi as a *jahili* leader who imposed heretical beliefs on Libyan Society. Its religious scholar Abua l-Mundhir urged jihadist struggle against Qaddafi's *apostate* regime as a theological duty and emphasized the urgency of creating a Sharia state.[15] For jihadi ideologues like al-Mundhir Qaddafi's embrace of Islamic values was mere apostate trickery and religious perversion. Like many Egyptian jihadi groups the LIFG was organized along hierarchical lines with its military, judicial, political, media and religious bureaus subordinate to a governing Shura council.

Under the 1994 leadership of Abu Abdallah al-Sadeq the network's strategy was to seize power by decapitating Libya's leadership.[16] Similar to Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) LIFG strategy sought to destroy the Libya's center of power through an assassination campaign. LIFG leaders hoped killing Qaddafi would catalyze popular revolt.

The ideological and tactical convergence between Egyptian and Libyan jihadist groups is striking. They viewed their countries as afflicted by *jahiliyyah* whose *apostate* leadership needed to be decapitated to unleash revolutionary forces.

Table 5.1 outlines the ideology and revolutionary strategy of Egyptian and Libyan jihadi groups.

Table 5.1 Egyptian and Libyan Jihadism

Case	*Egypt*	*Libya*
Jihadist View of the Regime	History of violent confrontation with Nasser's regime. Split with Muslim Brotherhood over its renunciation of jihad and its accommodation to state power. Terror campaigns in the 1980s, 1990s and early twenty-first century targeting security services and economic infrastructure	Qaddafi apostate ruler not genuinely Islamic. Divergent temporal Left Revolutionary origins of the regime and Islamic fig leaf reject non-Sharia state. Tribal and regional animosities cojoined with acceleration of Salafi intellectual currents
Elitist Revolutionary Strategy	Muhammad Faraj The *Neglected Duty* moral obligation to wage jihad against impious leaders as a revolutionary catalyzer. Decapitation strategy employed with assassination of Sadat and efforts to kill his successors.	Efforts to decapitate *apostate* regime and the weakness of the state would give way to larger revolt
Desired End State	Sharia State	Sharia State

ISLAMIST REBELLIONS: MOBILIZATION, EXTREMISM AND DESTRUCTION

Egypt

Extremist violence, internal divisions and failure have historically plagued Egyptian jihadists. Breaking from the MB in the late 1970s *Tawid al Jihad* waged a brutal terror campaign highlighted by the 1981 assassination of President Anwar al-Sadat during a military parade. State repression of the organization's membership led to its fracturing into two competing groups. The organization's successors EJI and the *Jama'a al-Islamiyya* (The Islamic Group) launched insurgent campaigns in the 1990s aimed at destroying the country's tourist industry and degrading the security services. The economic impact of the attacks and the large number of Egyptians killed dramatically depleted EJI and the Islamic Group's public support. With many of its militants' dead or imprisoned, Egyptian jihadism was pronounced *defeated* in the late 1990s. Some jailed Islamic Group and EJI

leaders renounced violence and reconciled with the Egyptian state earning them the ire of exiled unrepentant leaders like Ayman al-Zawahiri.[17]

Egyptian jihadism was dramatically spurred by events in the 1980s. President Sadat's relaxation of state coercion, the regime's tacit acceptance of MB charitable networks and promotion of conservative Islamic values created a fertile microclimate for jihadist rebirth.[18] Egypt was struck by waves of terrorist violence throughout the 1980s and 1990s as new jihadist organizations mounted vigorous campaigns aimed at destroying Egypt's economy.[19] Jihadists butchered sixty-two foreign tourists in November 1997 at Luxor's archaeological sites gaining international attention.

Terrorist violence during the Mubarak era was similarly motivated by extremists who sought to *cleanse* society of *apostasy* and *Islamize* the social order.[20] Egyptian jihadists almost killed Hosni Mubarak in 1995 at an African Union Conference he was attending in Addis Ababa. Throughout the 1990s Egypt was caught in a brutal cycle of terrorist violence and state repression. Thousands died during this terrible period. Jihadist efforts to destroy Egyptian public order and economy earned very few supporters.

The bureaucratic character of Egyptian jihadi networks inhibited their success. With their hierarchical leadership structures vulnerable to decapitation, EJI and the Islamic Group were dismembered by Egyptian security services. Abu Musab Suri describes the 1990s jihad directed by hierarchical organizations as a *total failure*. [21] With thousands of its militants dead or imprisoned, EJI and the Islamic Group faced an existential crisis. Their exiled leaders Ayman al-Zawahiri and Omar Abdel-Rahman (imprisoned for his role in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing) lost control over their Egyptian branches and soon repudiated local leaders efforts to renounce violence. EJI was fractured with Zawahiri's leadership of the group severely contested. Islamist insurgent ranks subdivided. Some recalcitrant jihadists, however, persisted in their efforts to overthrow the regime.

Extremists renewed their attacks on South Sinai seaside resorts popular with Israeli tourists between 2004 and 2006. High profile bombings in Taba, Sharm el-Sheikh and Dahab, however, killed more Egyptians than foreign tourists and the attack's adverse economic ramifications played into Mubarak's justification for repression. Divisions within the jihadi

community and the counterproductive impact of their extremist violence stalled jihadist momentum. Having failed repeatedly, Egyptian jihadists remained undaunted. Michael WS Ryan argues that Ayman al-Zawahiri is driven by an almost “irrational” desire to continue the jihadist struggle undaunted by the risk of death and past failures.[22]

THE 1990S LIFG REVOLTS

Formed by ex-mujahidin in the early 1990s the LIFG were inspired by the dynamism of Algeria’s Islamist insurgency.[23] Religious extremists were strong in Benghazi and eastern Libya supplied most of the country’s jihadists fighting in overseas wars.[24] The Libyan jihad against Qaddafi was shaped by several forces. The cultural conservatism of rural eastern Libya congealed with larger international developments. LIFG insurgency in the 1990s killed hundreds and featured many efforts to assassinate Qaddafi.

By 1995 LIFG militants were attacking prisons to release religious extremists. Among some of the groups most notable assaults in that year occurred against on security services in Benghazi in September 1995. Operating from northeastern mountains in the country’s LIFG insurgents attacked police and security services. The area was a launching pad for further attack on June 1996 that killed eight police officers.

Clashes with Libyan security forces continued throughout the decade. The LIFG was involved in bloody riots in Abu Salim prison near Benghazi in 1996 that killed 1,200 prisoners.[25] Qaddafi’s regime responded with massive arrests and imprisonment of LIFG members. The Libyan army assaulted the group’s northeast rural bastion in July 1996 inspiring several further LIFG attempts against Qaddafi’s life. The insurgency was weakened by a battle against security services outside Derna with key commander Salah Fithi bin Suleiman killed.[26]

The group’s erosion furthered in 1998 as Qaddafi increased pressure on Sudan to expel LIFG militants. With the loss of its Sudanese sanctuary and a degraded insurgency at home many Libyan jihadists chose political asylum overseas. Most settled in the United Kingdom as beneficiaries of Whitehall’s hostility to the Qaddafi regime for its association with the Lockerbie bombing.[27] Soon a vibrant Libyan Islamist financial and media

infrastructure developed in London organizing and supporting a variety of jihadist causes.

Those that did not chose political asylum went to overseas combat zones or joined AQ's network in Afghanistan. Frustrated by the unwillingness of Libya's masses to embrace the LIFG's call for rebellion, the movement progressively fractured and internationalized. LIFG commanders rose within the ranks of bin Laden's organization with Abu Yahya al-Libi and Abu al-Laith al-Libi reaching prominence.

By the mid-2000 the LIFG was *defeated* with its main fighters going to Iraq to join AQ's war against the West.[28] This exodus of fighters weakened the insurgency and forced a LIFG accommodation to the regime mirroring the reconciliation of some Egyptian jihadists. Organized by Qaddafi's son Saif al-Islam a prisoner release program for LIFG members was instituted.[29] The two hundred and fifty militants released from prison signed code of conduct renouncing jihad that was actively supported by the LIFG's leadership. Islamist repentance and accommodation, however was short. Arab Spring chaos and the weakening of the Qaddafi regime reignited jihadist militancy in Libya. Similar resurgence of extremist violence would occur in Egypt.

THE PHARAOH'S DEMISE AND A RENEWED JIHADIST CAMPAIGN

The Mubarak regime's demise during the Arab Spring involved many factors.[30] Among these were: (1) the use of social media by protesters to organize protests and expose government atrocities (2); protester unity in demanding that Mubarak step down; (3) the impact of high profile regime killings of protesters that broadened the base of the civil protest movement; and (4) the role of the military in forcing Mubarak from power. Soon afterward the MB emerged as the largest organized political movement in 2012 winning both parliamentary and presidential elections.

Though AQ leaders were perplexed by the Arab Spring bin Laden sensed an opportunity to expand his network.[31] The MB and its democratic government were opposed by AQ that condemned the organization's betrayal of Islamic values. Some observers argued the Brotherhood's

evolution suggested a viable democratic Islamist alternative to violent jihadism.[32]

The MB's chaotic governance dashed Egypt's democratic aspirations. Allegations of corruption, economic woes and autocratic rule progressively weakened Morsi's government, undermining its popularity.[33] The rise of radical jihadist movements in the lawless Sinai was furthered by Morsi's weakening of security services and his amnesty of Islamists political prisoners.[34] The MB's insistence on constitutional reform and the centrality of Sharia law in Egypt's legal system engendered mass opposition.

During this period, Morsi's efforts to reorganize the military encountered stiff resistance from the army's hierarchy that felt its preeminent economic and political status in Egyptian society was threatened.[35] As the economic situation worsened, mass citizen protests for the army's removal of the MB rose appreciably.

These pressures reached a critical mass during the summer of 2013 and the army intervened to remove the government and facilitate another *democratic transition*. Led by General Marshall Abdel Fattah al-Sisi the military repressed the Brotherhood jailing its leadership and demoralizing the organizations rank and file. Eric Trager noted that the MB's hierarchical organization made it vulnerable to the army's decapitation strategy.[36] The resulting leadership void in the Brotherhood inhibited its *passive resistance* against Field Marshall Sisi's government.

The post-military coup period included mass killing and imprisonment. By some estimates the government had killed over 1,000 MB members and imprisoned over 10,000 of its militants.[37] Trials and death sentences of hundreds of Brotherhood members including its head Mohammad Badie and former president Mohammad Morsi. The military's Brotherhood crackdown supported by the public led to Sisi's retirement from the army and his transition to successful presidential candidate. With his May 2014 election as president, Sisi presented himself as the only man capable of keeping Egypt safe from terrorism.[38]

His suppression of the Brotherhood ignited another round of jihadist terrorism. The government's repressive campaign assisted radical jihadists whose ranks were augmented by past prisoner amnesty program and the Morsi regime's weakening of security services. Reacting to Morsi's fall and

the military's seizure of the government, AQ reached out to the Islamists rank and file.

Nelly Lahoud argues AQ's leadership saw Egypt as an important front in the jihadist war and a strategic opportunity for expansion.[39] Such a reaction is not surprising given the prominence of Egyptian commanders like Zawahiri in AQ's historic formation and organization. Egypt has seen jihadist insurgencies for three decades that surged and declined to only resurface.

These campaigns were especially pronounced in the Sinai Peninsula. The territory's lawlessness, supportive Bedouin tribes, clandestine markets and vulnerable seaside tourist resorts has made it a magnet for jihadist terrorists.[40] Quiescent during Israeli occupation the radicalization of Bedouin proceeded after Egypt's reoccupation. Fiercely independent the Bedouin resisted Cairo's central authority. The Sinai's border with Gaza Strip, moreover, allowed inter-fertilization of Palestinian and Egyptian jihadist movements and the development of an arms smuggling network.

Libya

Jihadist militants were held in check by Qaddafi's iron rule that kept the country stable until the *Arab Spring*. Beyond brute repression, the pacification of the Islamist movement was illusory. Libya like Egypt attempted to rehabilitate jihadists which ironically encouraging their capacity to wage future wars against the state. With the *Arab Spring's* turmoil and vengeful Islamist militias assisted in the overthrow of Qaddafi's regime and some were able to establish some territorial go governance.

Rebel success was abetted by the regime's reorganization of the Libyan military. Qaddafi hollowed out the Libyan state and stripped the army of resources and autonomy.[41] Led by Qaddafi sons, Special Forces brigades and intelligence services dominated the state's repressive apparatus. Faced with protests that morphed into armed opposition, Qaddafi's regime savagely responded. Under a *responsibility to protect* doctrine the international community employed military force to restrain Qaddafi's repression of the revolt.[42] What began as a human rights operation evolved into an UN and Arab League sanctioned NATO air campaign to overthrow

Qaddafi. After months of fighting, the regime fell with Qaddafi's murder by enraged revolutionaries.

Militia attacks and NATO airstrikes accelerated the decomposition of the Libyan state. Anarchy was exacerbated by weak revolutionary regimes that financed hundreds of militias to provide security.[43] Tripoli's efforts to control militia behavior facilitated their armed capacity accelerating their seizure of land, towns and oil fields. Four years after the regime's collapse centrifugal pressures have only accelerated. Libya descended into a medieval world of competing vassal states divided by tribal, regional and ideological affiliations.

Historically as a base for Islamic activism, eastern militias have seized vast tracks of territory. Benghazi became an epicenter of jihadist radicalism with AQ-affiliated Ansar al-Sharia, a major player in Libya's terrorist violence.[44] The group's assault on the US embassy on September 11, 2012, resulting in the death of US ambassador Christopher Stevens vividly underscored the anti-Western orientation of Libya's resurgent jihadist movement.[45] Sadly western intervention helped jihadist forces to unleash anarchic violence that reverberated across Libya's borders.[46]

JIHADIST MOBILIZATION, EXTREMISM, DESTRUCTION AND REBIRTH

During the last three decades Egypt has experienced repeated waves of jihadist terrorism. Each terrorist campaign had a cyclical quality where terrorism peaked, declined and resurfaced. This cycle was pronounced in the Sinai Peninsula that has been a center for terrorist operations. Typically state repression and the negative publicity generated by civilian deaths weakened jihadist terrorist campaign until they imploded.

Hoping to cripple the economy Egyptian *Islamic Jihad* and *Islamic Group* counterproductively attacked major tourist centers to disastrous effect. The adverse economic impact of extremist violence and the civilian deaths undermined the appeal of extremist movements. Never did any jihadist insurgency attract mass support. The hierarchical character of Egyptian jihadist groups also made them vulnerable to security services penetration and dismantlement. Terror cells were disrupted by Egyptian counterterror operations and jihadi groups unproductively relied on assassinations and

strikes against the country's infrastructure. The deficiencies of Egyptian jihadist organizations have been roundly criticized by Abu Musab Suri and Ayman al-Zawahiri.

Jihadi groups remained resilient and their frustration over not achieving regime overthrow set the stage for later periods of violence. Failed terror campaigns only inspired renewed determination and greater jihadi violent tactics. Some had hoped that jihadi groups could be convinced through amnesty, repentance and prisoner release programs that violent extremism had turned a corner.[47] Such expectations proved delusional.

Islamic extremists historically have signed agreements they intend to dishonor.[48] They view accords with states as giving them breathing space to regain offensive capability, recruit more members and exploit strategic openings. Mohammad Morsi's amnesty program and release of hundreds of jihadist prisoners supplied an ample number of militants to pursue jihadist violence. As the turmoil of the Arab Spring proceeded, the strategic calculations of jihadists changed.[49]

This is especially true when Islamic radicals sense that regimes are vulnerable to terrorist destabilization. Such patience is a hallmark of Islamist insurgency movements.[50] Dormant for years Egyptian jihadists renewed their violence after the Arab Spring as the stitching of the state system withered. Extremist violence accelerated after the July 2013 military coup that overthrew Morsi's government and new regime's security crackdown against the MB. Similar patterns can be seen in Libya.

The LIFG in the mid-1990 engaged in repeated assaults against Libyan forces. They believed that Qaddafi's unpopularity and the dilapidated state of the economy made the country ripe for Islamist rebellion. Like their Egyptian counterparts they pursued a decapitation policy failing to kill Qaddafi. Though supported by a nascent AQ and given sanctuary by Hassan Turabi's Sudanese regime, the LIFG failed to gain popular support. While strong in the northeastern part of the country its violent campaign of insurrection lasted only a few years.

Despite high profile attacks against security services between 1995–1997 the Libyan army's assaults against the LIFG's northeastern *safe haven* weakened the insurgency. Mass detention of LIFG militants and supporters degraded the network. Qaddafi's pressuring of Turabi's regime effectively

ended Sudanese support and the growth of AQ's network siphoned off its best commanders and fighters. The flight of LIFG fighters to overseas battlefields accelerated during America's military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. So weakened was the LIFG that by 2009 it accepted an amnesty deal offered by the Qaddafi regime and hundreds of its militants were released from prison under a pledge to end their jihadist activities.

Egypt and Libya Islamist insurgents failed to develop into a popular base. The takfirist character of jihadist insurgent networks, state repression and counterproductive extremist violence weakened their capacity to challenge regime authority. Similarly flawed was the pursuit of a regime decapitation policy. Even when Egyptian jihadists killed Sadat the brutality of the state counterresponse and the hierarchical vulnerability of jihadist organizations cojoined to weaken the insurgency. With its three failed efforts at killing Qaddafi the LIFG withered before Tripoli's assault against their northeastern sanctuaries.

Faced with counterattacks by security services and popular revulsion at their violence, jihadist groups imploded in the nineties. Divisions over strategy and ideological issues fractured their ranks. Egyptian *Islamic Jihad* and the *Islamic Group* clashed and their leaders Ayman al-Zawahiri and Omar Abdel- Rahman were bitter rivals. Zawahiri in his memoirs effusively criticizes other jihadist leaders, questioning their tactics and judgement.[51] He complains of Egyptian jihadism's many failures and concludes reluctantly that Egypt is poorly suited for guerrilla warfare. Repeated leadership turnovers and intra-jihadist rivalries in the LIFG similarly hindered the success of their insurgent campaign. By the late 1990s the jihadist movements had weakened that some jailed militants were willing to renounce and participate in regime amnesty and prisoner release programs.[52]

Though weakened Egyptian and Libyan jihadist networks persisted. Faced with defeats by security services, extremists were resilient waiting for the more propitious circumstances to renew their assault. Driven by their hatred of *apostasy* and their utopian desires to restore a modernized version of seventh-century Sharia rule their past failures brought further extremism and brutality. This extremism was fueled by the regimes attempt to co-opt

Islamist ideology and amnesty to former jihadists. These measures unintentionally reinvigorated jihadi networks.

They set the stage for an Islamist resurgence that capitalized on the Arab Spring's weakening of the Egyptian and Libyan regimes. These conditions converged to give a new impetus to Islamist insurgency that is being recast by the IS's network. Outside of its Iraqi-Syrian base of operations, Egypt and Libya are the IS's most robust provinces.

THE IS RECASTS EGYPTIAN AND LIBYAN JIHADISM

Historically, the Sinai's lawlessness and its Bedouin population's hostility toward Cairo's rule have offered jihadists safe haven. Mubarak's fall from power spurred the growth of Islamist insurgent networks. Some of these groups aligned with the IS. Formed in February 2011Ansar Bayt al- Maqdis (ABM) is Salafi-jihadist organization operating in the Sinai and the Gaza Strip. Built upon anti-Zionist and Islamist ideologies, the network revolts against the Egyptian state and aspires to *liberate* Jerusalem. Since its formation the group has attacked Israeli and Egyptian interests. Sinai's natural gas pipeline that fuels Israel and Jordan's population was targeted. Troublesome during Morsi's reign, ABM was reinvigorated by the military's 2013 overthrow of the MB government. In retaliation ABM launched hundreds of attacks against Egyptian police, army and security installations killing three hundred and fifty police and soldiers.[53] With government counterstrikes against the network's leaders and members, thousands have died since the July coup.

ABM's growth was facilitated by the global jihadi community. The group's connection to AQ's Yemeni and Maghreb branches provided sophisticated arms and foreign fighters. Prior to merging with the IS's network, ABM communicated messages across AQ media organizations. Its assaults against the Egyptian state include targeted assassinations, bombings of security complexes in Islamiyya, Mansoura and Cairo, gas pipeline attacks, a tourist bus assault and a foiled attempt to kill Egypt's interior minister. Like its EJI predecessor ABM declared a war against Egypt's state and society. Its fanatical pursuit of jihadist violence has been increased by IS patronage. Some worry about a possible terror attack against the Suez Canal.[54] In 2013 a cargo ship was attacked by Islamist

radicals armed with rifle propelled grenades. With more sophisticated weapons, the network could launch a devastating strike against the Canal with disastrous consequences for the Egyptian economy.

The Long War Journal reported in 2013 over two hundred and seventy attacks in the Sinai by jihadi organizations since the July coup.[55] The Egyptian military offensive in the Sinai has resulted in civilian deaths, which have alienated Bedouin tribes some of whom are ABM's allies. Assisted by Israeli intelligence Egypt's military offensive killed some of the terror network's commanders and hundreds of its militants.[56]

Despite the army's campaign, the group is resilient and its November 2014 IS incorporation has augmented ABM's armed and financial capability. The ABM-IS merger gives Baghdadi's network a major presence in Egypt.[57] ABM's incorporation into IS was driven by a number of forces. Forced by the army's security corridor around Gaza and the government's crackdown, the group needed financial and weapons support. ABM aligned with IS to acquire ideological appeal, training, arms and financing capabilities.[58] Not all ABM militants, however, agreed with one faction *Ajnad Misr* (Soldiers of Egypt) breaking away from the network and siding with AQ.[59]

Daveed Gartensein-Ross argues, moreover, that the military's killing of AQ oriented leaders allowed a more pro-IS militant leadership to emerge.[60] Recognized in *Dabiq Five,* ABM pledged *bay'ah* to Baghdadi's caliphate. Along with support from Algerian, Yemeni, Saudi, Pakistani and Libyan jihadists, IS's hopes to expand its territorial domain. Reorganized into Wilayat Sinai, the jihadist movement was poised to receive money, fighters and arms.

Since its *bay'ah* Egyptian IS jihadists have targeted security services and energy infrastructure and moved away from supporting the Palestinian struggle. In December 2014 Wilayat Sinai claimed responsibility for attacks on natural gas pipelines running to Jordan and attacks against military vehicles.[61] A month later the network launched a complex series of attacks against security forces across the Sinai killing over forty police and military personnel.[62]*Dabiq*'s seventh issue *The Extinction of the Grey Zone* IS hails Wilayat Sinai January 2015 assaults against Sissi's *murtadd* army.[63]

The government's response has depleted some of Wilayat Sinai's leadership and its rank and file. Cairo reported in February 2015 that security forces had killed 172 Sinai militants, arrested 229 terrorist suspects and destroyed some 85 hideouts.[64] Despite this repression IS' Egyptian operations remain deadly. Notoriously it downed a Russian passenger jet flying from the Sinai to Moscow. The act venerated in **Dabiq** *Twelve* features an explosive device placed on the plane by a IS agent.[65] Until very recently Cairo was able to contain jihadist insurgency to the ungovernable Sinai. The same cannot be said of Libya's where jihadists attack across the country.

LIBYA'S POST-QADDAFI IMPLOSION

Libya offers opportunities for jihadist expansion. State implosion after Gaddafi's fall allowed jihadists to mobilize. With strong Islamist militias centered in Benghazi, this is not surprising. Like the Egyptian case AQ saw an opportunity to expand its network. The *Combating Terrorism Center* argues that Qaeda's leaders saw Libya as an important base in a renewed jihadist struggle.[66]

The country's eastern tribes have historically played a role in the development of a native jihadist movement. Inspired by the GIA revolts in Algeria, the LIFG bloody insurgent campaign in the 1990s ended in failure.[67] As in Algeria factions of the LIFG agreed to an amnesty and demobilization campaigns, effectively transitioning to a *nonviolent* Islamist social and political movement. Such efforts at reconciliation proved ephemeral. Jihadists struggle against *apostasy* and their overriding need to fulfill *divine roles* in the rebuilding of a Sharia state drives them forward. They are undaunted by any obstacle.

The region's security problems are magnified by Libya's artificial borders and the salience of local ethno-tribal identities. Complex ideological, tribal and regional forces impair national unity and state sovereignty. Militias, warlords and jihadist groups impair the consolidation of state power. Eastern and western tribal loyalties in Libya frustrate national development that Qaddafi's death widened.[68] Libya has devolved into competing blocs featuring rival eastern and western governments.

Radical jihadists have expanded their territorial control. Ansar al-Sharia and aligned Islamist groups drove opponents from Benghazi and established Sharia governance. Aligned with local groups, IS militants in Derna wanted to establish a Libyan version of its rule in Syria's Raqqa.[69] Sharia courts and religious police meted out draconian punishments based extremist interpretation of Islamic law. Though expelled from Derna by rival jihadist groups, IS expanded into Sirte in 2015–2016 and intensified its jihadist campaign against regime forces and allied militias.[70]

Unlike Sinai Wilayat, IS groups in Libya were by 2015 secure enough to create governing structures and religious tribunals in some areas. Aaron Zelin argues that under Wilayat Tarabulus and IS jihadist rule in early 2016 Sirte reached very highest levels.[71] The group's Libyan provinces were its strongest organizational presence beyond the Levant. They were also notorious for their brutality.

The IS's February 2015 beheading of twenty Egyptian Christians and its graphic video posting of the punishment invited Egyptian air strikes against IS positions in Derna and Sirte.[72] The country's economic collapse has produced centrifugal pressures allowing for IS expansion. IS Sinai position, furthermore allowed Baghdadi's caliphate to expand operations to the Egyptian mainland. It is to this issue that we now turn.

IS'S EGYPTIAN AND LIBYAN EXPANSION

IS's growth in Egypt and Libya was part of a calculated strategy of expansion. *Dabiq*'s fifth edition *Remaining and Expanding* recognizes the *bay'ah* of Egyptian and Libyan jihadists and their incorporation into IS' territorial fold.[73] By creating these provinces IS opened multiple fronts in its global terror strategy. It is a policy of resistance and self-affirmation. With bay'ah's from Egyptian, Saudi, Algerian, Libyan and Yemeni jihadist groups, Aaron Zelin argues that IS' *archipelago strategy* aims to survive the international military campaign and displace AQ's dominance of the global jihadist movement.[74]

IS campaigns hoped to absorb local jihadist groups and attract foreign fighters beyond its Iraqi-Syrian base. Andrew Engel's argues foreign fighters and Libyan extremists returning from the Syrian and Iraqi

battlefields played a dominant role in the new *provinces* suggesting that IS' hierarchy prioritized the Libyan struggle.[75]

The IS's leadership in 2013 began to explore the development of Libyan provinces capitalizing on the collapse of state authority and the country's large ungoverned areas. The caliphate chief ideologue Turki al-Binali toured the country between March and May 2013 and reportedly was impressed that Libya had potential for the development of a strong IS branch.[76]

Aaron Zelin reports that the network began to send fighters from Syria to Libya as early as spring 2014 and the branches' first two leaders (Wassim al-Zubadi and Abdul Qadr al-Najdi) were respected Iraqi commanders that had appointed by Baghdadi.[77] Though Zubadi was killed in a US air strike in 2015 Nadj remains the overall commander of the organization's remaining network.

The role of foreign commanders in IS-Libya parallel AQI's early evolution that was dominated by Jordanian and Egyptian leaders. The flow of foreigners to Libya after the Qaddafi's fall is on just a bit below the migration of foreign jihadists during the 2003 Iraq war.

The Libyan conflict has drawn some 3,500 foreign fighters and Arab, European, African fighters have joined Libya-IS hoping to spread jihadi insurgency to neighboring countries.[78] Given its long border with Libya Tunisian fighters are dominant among IS' foreign fighter cadres. With an estimated 1,500 Tunisian jihadists fighting in Libya-IS in the country would have a large recruiting base.[79]

The IS's Libyan branch's early development has been attributed to group of Libyan jihadists who formed a IS aligned group in Syria that played a pivotal role in training given to French and Belgian jihadists responsible for the 2015 Paris and 2016 Brussels attacks. Numerous analysts have concluded that this organization *Kabitat al-Battar al-Libiyah* served as the nucleus for IS-Libya external operations planning and has been implicated in attacks across neighboring Tunisia and in Europe.[80] IS-Libya has also been implicated in the 2016 Berlin and 2017 Manchester attacks. The Libyan branches connection to these attacks is further underscored by US directed retaliatory strikes against IS terror camps.

IS's *archipelago* strategy, however, presents organizational and security challenges. IS' remaining and expanding [*baqiyah and wa-tatamaddad]* policy hoped to facilitate unity and dissuade competitors. The network's annexation of ABM reflects a pragmatic effort to harmonize local insurgency with Baghdadi's caliphate project.[81] While local jihadists groups Abu Salim Martyrs Brigade (ASMB) and Mujahideen Shura Council (MASC) were able to resist IS encroachment in Derna its residential areas were contested.[82] If IS can consolidate jihadist forces this may propel the Sinai and Libyan insurgencies into a more extremist direction. The flow of arms and weapons across the long porous Egyptian-Libyan border could allow IS to accelerate its insurgent activity. Libya's shoreline and proximity to Italy, moreover, offers the caliphate the opportunity to exploit smuggling networks and penetrate the soft underbelly of Europe.

Throughout 2015–2016 IS-directed terror campaigns gained momentum. The pace of terror attacks escalated in Libya with attacks against Tripoli's Corinthia Hotel, assaults against foreign embassies, seizure of the town of Nawfaliyah and bombings of oil refining plants are a concerted campaign to plunge the country into chaos.[83] IS suicide bombers in early 2015 killed over forty people in Qubba.[84]

Since ABM's 2014 IS *bay'ah*, the jihadist campaign in Sinai has expanded. In June 2015 Wilayat Sinai launched attacks aimed at disrupting the tourist trade in Luxor killing two police officers and the ISIS branch attacked multinational observers monitoring the implementation of the 1979 Camp David Accords. The US government estimates that since 2014 some two thousand Egyptian soldiers have been killed in IS-linked insurgent violence.[85] Wilyat Sinai has spread its operations to mainland Egypt targeting Coptic Christians.

Driven by sectarian hostility toward the *people of the cross* IS has attacked monasteries, bombed churches, assassinated priests and beheaded Christians. Attacks against Christians sharply escalated in 2016–2017. IS terror operations targeted churches killing twenty-five people in December 2016 and forty persons on Palm Sunday April 9, 2017.[86]

The caliphate's fighters reinforced the network's sectarian strategy by assassinating twenty-eight Copts in late May 2017 traveling to an orthodox monastery. *Rumiyah*'s ninth issue justifies its anti-Christian violence by

arguing that the Copts are “belligerent” and absent a truce and the payment of the zikat to Muslim authority the Christians are entitled no sanctuary. It, furthermore, is permissible for Muslims to eradicate *polytheists*, seize their property, assault their places of worship, assassinate their priests and enslave their women.[87]

The IS in Egypt has also targeted Sufi mosques and communities. Considered a *deviant sect* by Sunni extremists for their veneration of past religious teachers, the community has experienced past terror attacks. In November 2017 dozens of IS terrorists attacked a Sufi mosque in northern Sinai killing some three hundred and fifty people.[88]

Violence against religious minorities is seen by IS as an effective recruitment tool. The caliphates executions are presented as a grotesque form of theatrical expression. IS Libyan operations feature grisly internet posted beheadings.[89] These ritualized filmed executions feature western jihadist spokespersons underscoring the international nature of IS’ operations. In its video executing Copts, a IS masked spokesperson promises that the caliphate will *conquer* Rome from Libya’s shores.

By dramatizing its province’s activities, IS emphasizes their expansion. IS terror camps in Libya trained Tunisian jihadists who killed scores of foreign tourists in Tunis’ Bardo Museum and Sousse beach resort attacks. Fear that IS-Libya would mount future terror operations in Tunisia resulted in US air strikes that killed IS emir Abu Nabil and assaulted its Sabratha terror training camp killing forty-nine militants.[90]

Undeterred by these airstrikes IS Libyan operations attacked Ben Gardane, Tunisia.[91] IS’ Egyptian and Libyan *wilaya*, are far from secure. At war against states and rival jihadists, IS confronts stiff resistance in Libya. Formed in April 2016 a UN backed *national unity* government has recaptured hundreds of miles coastal territory held by the IS-Libya.[92]

Misrata based militias in May 2016 launched a military campaign against the caliphate’s bastion in Sirte. IS resistance was fierce enough that US was forced to assist the assault with some three hundred and sixty-eight airstrikes fearing that Sirte could become the caliphate’s rearguard base.[93] Though the town was conquered by November 2016 many of IS fighters were able to escape to Southern Libya. With thousands of IS militants still in Libya the prospect of a quick victory over IS-Libya is unlikely.[94]

Despite IS-Libya's erosion it has been linked to attacks in Berlin and Manchester.[95] Anis Amri who in December 2016 drove a truck into a Berlin Christmas market killing eleven people communicated across Telegram with two IS Libyan operatives and bomber Salman Ramadan Abedi in May 2017 who detonated his improvised explosive device extinguishing the lives of twenty-two persons at a Manchester Arena concert met with an external operations unit in Libya.

Analysts speculate that the caliphate transferred part of its external operations network to Libya given its close proximity to European shores.[96] Johannes Saal, for example, argues that in 2015 IS established training camps in Sirte and Sabratha to target Western interests in Tunisia.[97] The network would later expand its operational sphere by working with Libyan and Tunisian jihadists in Europe to attack Western countries. Sasal argues that Libya's external operations branch likely played a role in the Berlin and Manchester attacks.[98] Given Libya's chronic lawlessness the collapse of IS position in the Levant may elevate the importance of its Libyan external operations branch.

Obstacles to IS Expansion

Wilayat Sinai and IS's Libyan wilaya offer contrasting approaches to provincial development.IS in Egypt absorbed existing networks while in Libya it created provinces by expending resources and relocating militants. Foreign fighters dominated Libya's IS provinces while they are relatively absent in its Egyptian wilayat.[99] IS's foreign fighters provide expertise, combat skill and have built local alliances.[100]

State and local resistance to IS encroachment vary in these countries. During the Arab Spring regime transitions created different trajectories. Egypt's powerful army represents a formidable challenge to IS expansion beyond its Sinai base. Significantly *Wilayat Sinai* has not been able yet to seize territory and create governing structures.

Military professionalism and independence explain some of these differences. Since the Yom Kippur war Egyptians have deferred to the military and revere it as a unifying institution.[101] The army's provision of US arms makes Egypt the most powerful Arab state. The military controls a

vast business establishment and determines key government contracts, making it a dominant economic actor.

Past Egyptian leaders (Sadat and Mubarak) were recruited from the armed forces legitimizing military rule over Egyptian society. The army's removal of Mubarak earned in it support from the Egyptian street.[102] Capitalizing on its role as a *guardian of the public trust* Field Marshal Sissi exploited disenchantment with the Morsi regime and engineered a July 2013 coup against the Islamists. His brutal campaign against the *terroristic* MB is popular in Egyptian society with the military presented as the only institution that can prevent Egypt's implosion.[103]

Professionalism, legitimacy and competence were missing in Libya's military. Qaddafi's reorganization of the army gutted it of independence and armed capacity. His son's commanded military units served the family dynasty's interests. The army's unprofessionalism and incompetence in fighting past wars resulted in embarrassing failures in neighboring Chad.[104] With Qaddafi's death and the disbanding of his son's militias, Libya descended into a Hobbesian state of anarchy characterized by militia infighting.

The security challenges faced by the Egyptian and Libyan militaries vary. Morsi's fall in Egypt coalesced jihadist forces in the Sinai allowing IS to absorb an established network. The IS was helped by Bedouin tribal hostility toward Cairo and their criminal smuggling networks.[105] IS has few significant jihadist competitors in the Sinai though it confronts a strong Egyptian military.

It has mounted a virulent insurgency the Sinai that has killed large numbers of Egyptian security forces.[106] The operational tempo of its assault against police and the army has not let up. In July 2017 IS attacked an army outpost in the northern Sinai killing twenty-three soldiers and wounding dozens more.[107]

IS-Libya is helped by a weak state but its expansion is constrained by rival warlords, militias and ethnic-tribal forces. Local and tribal identities militate against IS' ability to coalescence forces behind a transnational jihadist state. IS militants have fought rivals in Sirte, Benghazi and Derna. Tripoli based militias undertook military operations against the caliphate's Libyan branch. With opposition from regime forces, militias and local

warlords, IS maybe able to control a few towns. Even this could be transitory. With its dependence on foreign fighters IS brutality (including crucifixions) have undermined its popular support.[108] By late 2016 IS lost control over Sirte is and the caliphate's militants have been expelled from Derna by an AQ-affiliated Islamist militia a year earlier.[109]

The IS's future success in Libya is dependent upon luring local jihadists. This merger is unlikely and rival groups in Derna and Benghazi effectively resisted IS encroachment. The caliphate's *wilaya* strategy in Libya and Egypt may depend upon its capacity to withstand the international military campaign against its Syrian-Iraq base. With its recent demise in the Levant the durability of the caliphate's provinces looks problematic. Its direction of insurgencies, however, does not!

Egypt and Libya, however, lack the confessional configuration that IS exploited in Syria and Iraq. Religious stratification plays into IS sectarian takfirist approach. Neither Egypt nor Libya has significant numbers of Shi'ite, Alawites and Sufis that would allow IS to exploit sectarian passions. With this limiting factor, Egyptian state authority could be successful in containing IS expansion beyond the Sinai while government forces and rival groups have eroded IS's gains in Libya.

Other factors weigh against permanent *wilaya* in these countries. These networks' extreme takfirist ideology inspire resistance. Past Egyptian and Libyan jihadist campaigns bloodletting eroded popular support invariably leading to destruction.

This being said IS remains a transnational movement with superior resources and the foreign fighters that it can provide to its provinces insure its branches resilience. What this suggests is that defeating the Baghdadi's transnational movement will be protracted. Eliminating IS's Egyptian and Libyan ability to destabilize security is anything but guaranteed. The IS-guided insurgency in Egypt continues to rage and the network's targeting of Christians and Sufis is likely to intensify.

Denied territorial space to govern IS has morphed into an insurgent-terror movement. The tenacity of jihadist insurgents has overcome past defeats. Their desire to create a *new Medina* drives them forward. Barring this they are content to die to achieve this utopian project.

Even if all of IS's Libyan provinces are destroyed militants can escape southwards to the lawless Sahel. Mali and Nigeria have featured past jihadist insurgencies that once defeated reappeared.

With its March 2015 pledge of IS affiliation Nigeria's Boko Haram offers the caliphate a further expansion opportunity. The IS in Libya, moreover, could try to mount a challenge to AQIM historic dominance in Mali.

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Chapter 6

The Islamic State's Impact on the Jihadist War in Nigeria and Mali

This chapter focuses on West Africa where jihadist insurgencies have exploded in the last two decades.[1] Islamist terrorism is particularly severe in Nigeria and Mali. Though defeated in the past insurrectionary religious movements persist in these countries. Jihadist resilience in the Sahel is troubling but fits prior cycles where extremist failure breeds frustration, ideological fervor and more violence.

These revolts cannot be divorced from societal ethno-sectarian fissures and colonial legacies. Religious antagonism and economic marginalization drive these insurrections. This chapter has three core sections. First, Islamist views in Nigeria and Mali are examined. Second, past revolts are analyzed based on their *mobilization, extremism, destruction* and *rebirth* stages. Third, IS's impact on the jihadist struggle is assessed. The chapter concludes by providing an assessment of the jihadist movement in the Sahel and what it may portend for West Africa's future security.

ISLAMIST VIEWS OF STATE AND SOCIETY

Nigeria

The Sokoto caliphate that ruled over North Nigeria between 1809 and1903 is the chapter's starting point. Its historical memory has profound significance for contemporary jihadist movements in the Sahel.[2] The caliphate regional trading network and its warrior state are considered by Boko Haram (BH) and the Movement for the Unity and Jihad in West

Africa (MUJWA) as an example to emulate. Destroying secular rule and resurrecting a modern version of the Sokoto caliphate for them are key objectives.

The caliphate's subjugation by British colonial authorities burns in the consciousness of West African Islamic extremists. By the late nineteenth century the caliphate had been weakened by economic atrophy and corrupt rulers.[3] It lacked the military capability to withstand European colonial encroachment. Exercising indirect authority over Northern Nigeria Great Britain permitted the caliph to exercise authority that needed to be subservient to British interests.[4]

The caliphate's founder Usman Dan Fodio is mythologized by BH leaders. Fodio seized power from Hausa king Yunfa in 1809 by crafting a movement based on Islamic fundamentalism that pandered to populist grievances.[5] It was the first revivalist movements led by dynamic *warrior-preachers* whose later incarnations would convulse Nigerian society. Inspired by Fodio his successors were even more radical and violent.

BH's precursors the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and the Maitesine saw Fodio's caliphate as an exemplar that ultimately regressed under British and post-colonial secular rule.[6] They viewed Great Britain's exploitation of the caliph's authority as eviscerating the post's legitimacy. The caliphate's subsequent atrophy enrages indigenous jihadi movements. They see Nigeria's mainstream clergy and its post-colonial secular state as corrupt and Westernized. Only through the eradication of *apostate* rule and the elimination of *deviant* clerical practice, they argue can Muslims rectify the injustice of the caliphate's subjugation.

Islam reached Northern Nigeria by the fifteenth century. Arab traders and missionaries in the Sahel were a conduit for Islam's spread. By the eighteenth century most Hausa kingdoms in the Lake Chad region had adopted Islam as their religion. It is within this context that Fodio's revivalist movement can be best understood.

Fodio was a member of the Toronkawa clan of the nomadic Fulani tribe that migrated from Senegal to Hausaland in the fifteenth century.[7] Being an entrepreneurial minority the Fulani achieved economic and political influence with the Hausa kingdoms. Some Fulani served as court advisers and administrators for these royal states. As a devout and ascetic theology

student Fodio was exposed to a wide spectrum of Islamic thought including Wahhabism and Sufism. During his twenties he began to tour Hausa states preaching religious ideas that synthesized Wahhabi and Sufi doctrines.[8]

The parallels between his life and the future Sudanese Mahdi Muhammad Amad are striking. Both were religious scholars who preached Islamic purity and social justice creating a cult following that morphed into an insurgency. Like the Mahdi, Fodio had a populist message that railed against heavy taxation and he exposed the *heresies* of apostate rulers.[9] He pilloried the moral and theological laxity of the Hausa king Bawa and his successor Yunfa. Preaching a message of austere religious moralism and egalitarian social justice he created a mass movement. King Yufa's efforts to persecute Fodio's Fulani movement led to his flight to remote Gudu where his followers appointed him *Commander of the Faithful* (Amir al-Mumirin) that effectively fused religious and political power.[10] Like the Mahdists some seventy years later he sought the re-imposition of Sharia and the fortification of Islamic Medieval practices.

Secure in Gadu Fodio raised a guerrilla force that in 1804 toppled Yunfa's *apostate* kingdom. Fodio exploited Fulani grievances against the Hausa feudal structure suffusing them with religious fervor.[11] The blending of tribal animosity with Islamic militancy would later be followed by the Kanuri dominated BH movement whose popularity rests on ethno-sectarian loyalties. Fodio's declaration of jihad and his five-year war against the Hausa kingdom concluded when his fanatical mujahidin seized Yunfa's capital.

Fodio's constructed an Islamic warrior state that expanded beyond the Hausa kingdoms. Comparable to the early Arab caliphs he sought to expand Islam's domain through trade, *dawa* [missionary preaching] and military conquest. Fodio's caliphate enslaved subjugated peoples and relegating most non-Muslim religious minorities to a secondary position. Fodio's successors exploited the slave trade contributing to the caliphate's prosperity. By the end of the nineteenth century Sokoto caliphate stretched across Northern Nigeria into parts of Niger and Cameroon.[12] It would soon be subject to the predations of European powers.

British forces in 1902 subjugated Northern Nigeria by aligning with the Fulani aristocracy and preserving the Sokoto caliphate's institutional

foundations. Hoping to avoid a Mahdist-like rebellion they exercised indirect rule permitting local powers a great deal of autonomy. During the colonial period Sharia governed Northern Nigeria and the British supported the application of Islamic law.[13] When fundamentalist revivalist movements challenged British sovereignty over Northern Nigeria they were brutally repressed. Such challenges, however, were infrequent.

While the British policy did preserve social peace their maintenance of Islamic rule encrusted resistance to secularization after independence preventing the development of a cross-sectarian identity. Muslim Hausa-Fulani grievances in the north exacerbated these ethno-sectarian cleavages contributing to future cross-confessional violence. Christian hostility toward northern Muslim elites, and their repressive application of Sharia rule set the stage for future confrontations.

The north's economic marginalization and poverty, moreover, encouraged resistance to the Nigerian state.[14] Most Muslim children in the region were educated in religious academies incapable of providing children with work related skills. Given the endemic corruption and incompetence of the Nigerian state, public education and the legal system were mistrusted further encrusting sectarian animosities.

Post-colonial Nigeria preserved the Fulani aristocracy and did not abolish the caliph's position. Much of Nigeria's mainstream clergy were tied to the country's governing structure.[15] For extremists the integration of local Muslim rulers into Nigeria's federal structure discredited their religious legitimacy. Resentful of Christian dominance of the federal state some northerners became attracted to religious revivalist movements. Led by charismatic preachers these groups railed against secular *apostasy*. Often cultish these movements have convulsed Nigerian society.

Not surprisingly the post-colonial period witnessed internecine violence between Muslims and Christians. This cycle of cross-generational ethno-sectarian cleansing destroyed the foundations of religious tolerance that historically have defined West African Sufi Islam. Islamic fundamentalism in West Africa also responded to Saudi Arabia's construction of local mosques, trained clerics and subsidized religious education. Such largesse was tied to Wahhabi religious principles that saw Sufi Islam as *deviant* and Christians as *infidels*.

Given this explosive religious, political and economic tableau, fundamentalist religious movements grew. As Nigeria's economic and sectarian tensions increased each successive revivalist groups became more extreme. The response of the Nigerian state to these movements veered between ignoring the problem, appeasement and brutal repression. None of these approaches worked very well.[16] The state's extrajudicial killings of the leaders of these movements incubated a culture of violence and revenge.

The 1970s Maitatsine movement was the first of these Islamic revivalist movements to challenge the security of the Nigerian state.[17] Started by charismatic preacher Muhammad Marwa, the group initially adopted an Islamist Kanuri tribal agenda that made moderate demands on the government. Marwa's blunt often scatological discourse appealed to largely illiterate young men. As his movement grew, Marwa's agenda became radically trans-Islamic.

By December 1980 Marwa created a populist insurgency committed to attacks against police stations and the government. Ordered by the federal government to disband, Marwa and his followers revolted. The Nigerian army intervened and in eleven days of fighting some 4,000 people perished and hundreds of villages were destroyed.[18]

Today BH is often described as a radicalized offshoot of the Maitatsine movement.[19] Like Mawa's group BH is Kanuri dominated. The Maitatsine's grisly end would set the stage for continued violence and even more radical movements. Repression of the Maitatsine allowed the government to continuously ignore the chronic poverty, underdevelopment and illiteracy of its northern states. Abuja's social neglect was exacerbated by other policies.

Hoping to forestall future Islamist insurrections the Nigerian state responded to northern sentiment that clamored for the imposition of Sharia rule. By 1999 most northern states enforced Islamic law further encrusting resistance and hostility to secularization and religious minorities.[20] Paradoxically the central government accelerated the violent proclivities of future revivalist movements that saw the Sharia courts as a front for secular rule.

Post-Maitatsine groups like BH viewed Nigerian society as infected by *jahiliyyah*. Within this mindset Abuja's use of Sharia courts and

institutional trappings of the Sokoto caliphate to preserve its security denies God's rightful sovereignty (*hakimiya*) and is a perversion of religion to meet state goals.[21]

Faced with such heresies, the Maitatsine's successors saw violent revolution against the state and ethnic cleansing of Christians as the means to restore legitimate Sharia rule. The integration of Muslim rulers within Nigeria's federal structure, moreover, necessitated the use of *takfir* to justify the killing of *impious* Muslims. The confluence of poverty, corruption, underdevelopment, past violence, Wahhabi values and sectarian animosities bred jihadist frustration and a fanatical quest for revenge.

Having *defeated* one Islamist movement Nigeria would confront future extremist insurgencies that despite their inability to seize power have remained resilient. The death of Muhammad Mawa set the stage for BH's Muhmmad Yusef and would reach its most fanatical progression in BH's current emir Abu Bakr Shekau.

Mali

Mali like Nigeria is a colonial creation whose national boundaries cut across tribal and ethnic groups. These ethno-tribal cleavages have hindered the development of a cohesive nation-state. The nomadic Tuareg inhabit the country's north have, for example, little faith in the central government.[22]

The Tuareg are spread over Libya, Algeria, Mali and Niger and their dream of a united homeland has been frustrated by established states. They have been described as *pirates*, *raiders* and *thieves*.[23] Prior to independence they subsisted on herding, trading and raiding. They are legendary for their ruthlessness. This reputation may be a function of an inhospitable climate they inhabit and their miserable economic conditions. With a per capita income of just $720.00 Mali in 2017 ranked twenty-nine on the fragile states' index.[24]

Comparable to Kanuri grievances in Nigeria the Tuareg have been subjugated to economic marginalization and alienated by a corrupt inept and remote central government.[25] Separatist sentiment is especially strong in Mali that has experienced Tuareg rebellions in 1960s and 1990s. Despite Muamar al-Qaddafi's 1990s efforts to mediate the Tuareg conflict was decisive and political settlement in Mali has proved illusory. Tuareg rebels

regrouped and revolted two decades later. Faced with state repression, ethnic discrimination and poverty many Tuareg left for Libya in the 1970s to serve in Qaddafi's state as mercenaries.[26]

These Tuareg mercenaries would serve as a potent military force that would return to Mali after the Libyan's regime's 2011 collapse. Though mainly secular in character Tuareg tribes have allied with jihadi groups operating in the Sahel sharing illicit smuggling routes.

Recognized by Ayman al-Zawahiri in 2007 AQIM has extensive operations throughout West Africa.[27] Historically anchored in Algeria's fractious jihadist movement the network has extended its operations across North Africa and the Sahel. Born as a formal union between the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) and AQ Central the network hoped to launch a North African jihad against Western interests and overthrow the region's *apostate* regimes. Led by Abdulmalek Drukdel whose power base lies in the northeast Algerian mountains AQIM is a decentralized network whose regional emirs wield considerable autonomy.[28] The movement is beset by internal divisions and some of its regional chiefs have bolted from the network to create new groups.

Algiers counterterror campaign against AQIM forced many of the network's branches to relocate to the lawless Sahel. There Moktar Belmokhtar and the late Abu Zeid katiba (battalions) have autonomous operations. They forged lucrative economic and personal relations with Tuareg clans becoming dominant actors in arms, tobacco and drug smuggling.[29] In the last decade AQIM emirs have created a vast criminal-terror network that spans across the Sahel. Distrusting the central leadership Belmokthtar broke from AQIM to form a succession of independent groups.

Known as *Mr. Marlboro* for his lucrative tobacco smuggling operations Belmokhtar is considered a rogue independent operator.[30] He fought with bin Laden during the Afghan jihad and has waged armed struggle in the Maghreb for some two decades. He was member of the GIA in Algeria breaking from the network because of its killing of Muslim civilians. Since the mid-1990s he has navigated across various terror networks changing his affiliations to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

Despite his lack of fidelity Belmokhtar commitment to AQ's agenda of attacking Western interests cannot be doubted.[31] His network has been

implicated in attacks on French mining interests, foreign embassies, hotels that cater to Western tourists and the kidnapping of European hostages. Like the Haqqani network in Central Asia Belmokhtar group has fused jihadist activity with criminal enterprise.

He played a role in AQIM's support for the Malian insurrection. Belmokhtar's most notorious exploit was his 2013 attack on the Amenas natural gas works in southern Algeria where hundreds of foreign workers were taken prisoner and over forty were killed by his militants when security forces sought to put an end to the hostage crisis.[32] Since the Amenas attack Belmokhtar has remained a shadowy figure who has rejoined AQIM and his network has spread to Libya where he may have been killed in a 2016 French air strike. Dead or alive his organization remains a potent force.

AQIM's fractures can also be seen in the formation of the MUJWA. Alienated by AQIM's central command inability to channel sufficient support to its Sahelian katibas and its purported discrimination against Black Africans, the Mauritanian-led group created is committed to liberate the Sahel from apostate rule. It seeks to create a regional jihadist state to protect the *ummah* from Western globalization's predations.

AQIM and Mourabatoun's kidnapping of dozens of Western Europeans has proved especially profitable with the Spanish and French governments reportedly paying huge ransoms. This money has been parlayed in financing a terror campaign impacting Algeria, Mali, Niger and has spread to Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso. AQIM finance and arms played a formidable role in the 2012 Tuareg rebellion.[33]

Some AQIM's leaders have married into important Tuareg families. The relationship between some Tuareg clans and AQIM, moreover, has exposed them to jihadist ideology that has exerted a transformative impact on factions within their secessionist movement. Often described as a key figure in the Tuareg independence, the case of Iyad Ag Gali is illustrative.[34]

Gali was an important leader in the 1991 rebellion that was crushed by Mali's military. As part of a national reconciliation plan Tuareg groups participates in a unity government and Gali served as a diplomat in Saudi Arabia. This experience exposed him to Wahhabi fundamentalism. Driven by the cause of Tuareg separatism now tinged with Islamic extremism Gali

formed *Ansar al Din* (Partisans of Religion) that played a role in the 2012 jihadist seizure of much of northern Mali and the construction of an extremist state. The group's fanatical rule over Kindal was notorious for its grisly executions and its draconian implementation of Sharia.[35]

Weak states, poverty and tribal grievances have catalyzed the growth of jihadi movements that have exploited ethno-tribal cleavages to advance their regional agenda. Their ultimate goal is to attack Western interests, destabilize regional governments and create an Islamic *emirate*. AQIM capitalized on Qaddafi's 2011 overthrow and exploited the 2012 Tuareg rebellion to advance its regional agenda.

ISLAMIST MOBILIZATION, RADICALIZATION, DESTRUCTION AND REBIRTH

Nigeria's Boko Haram

Abuja's crushing of the Maitatsine revolt and its killing of Muhammad Marwa did not eradicate jihadist fervor in Northern Nigeria. Though the government declared *victory*, its success in repressing the cause of radical Islam proved transitory. The quest to avenge the Maitatsine and jihadi frustration over not being able to topple *apostate* rule coalesced. Jihadists were anxious for an opportunity to strike the Nigerian state. While the movement's followers disbanded they never gave up the call for Islamic rebellion. Continued Christian-Muslim violence throughout the 1990s and festering regional economic problems created an environment for another Islamic separatist movement. Much of this Islamist anger was also a consequence of the corruption and maldistribution of revenue attendant to the country oil boom whose benefits were disproportionately concentrated in the Christian south.

BH's early development can be traced to the mid-1990s in Maiduguri and has been varyingly explained as originating within an Islamic student union or centered in one of the city's radical mosques. The movement's formative period was spearheaded by dynamic preacher Mohammad Yusef whose impassioned sermons attracted hundreds of followers. Among those devotees is the current leader of BH Abubaker Shekau who would emerge as Yusef's chief lieutenant. BH began as a Kanuri-based movement that tied

tribal and religious grievances establishing an ethnic link to its Maitatsine predecessor.

Yusef's savage critique of Nigeria's immoral and unjust secular society appealed to the talakawa [commoners]. In his youth he was a militant of the extremist Jama'atul Tajdidi Islam (JTI) in Borno state but went on to create his own Sunni Wahhabi-inspired group. With poverty rate three times higher in the north than and a 70 percent illiteracy rate in Borno State Yusef's sermons resonated powerfully with his followers.[36] Mohammad idolized the work of Syrian medieval cleric Ibn Taymiyyah.

BH's choice of Taymiyyah as their source of inspiration is hardly surprising. His writings have been venerated by virtually every jihadist network on the planet for his critique of Muslim Mongol rulers and his urging of jihad against them legitimates the use of takfirist doctrine.[37] Without some kind of excommunication procedure jihadist insurrections would be on a precarious religious footing given the faith's prohibition of intra-confessional killing. Taymiyyah critique of heterodox Muslim sects like the Shia, Druze, Sufi and Alawites, moreover, and his exaltation of violence against them also provide the religious rationale for BH's sectarian warfare against Islamic minorities.[38]

Central to the group's ideology is its rejection of Western civilization of which public schools are a potent symbol. Roughly translated, BH combines Hausa and Arabic words meaning "*Western education is forbidden.*"[39] The group, however, favors the name *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati w'al Jihad* [People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teaching and Jihad]. Irrespective of appellation, the movement sees Western civilization as haram [forbidden]. Yusef raged against secular social and political institutions that are "sinful" and "corrupt."[40] BH militants, furthermore, chafe at traditional Muslim elites whose imposition of Sharia law in twelve northern states failed to meet their standard of Islamic purity.[41]

The movement sees the Nigerian Christian state as persecuting Muslims, subjugating them to *unnatural* secular rule that aims to destroy Islamic values. The chronic poverty of the Northern states like Borno, Kaduna and Yobe is blamed on corrupt Western political and economic systems. Rule dictated by democratic institutions, furthermore, subject Muslims to the

imperfect rule of men and deny them the perfection of Sharia governance [*hakimiya*].

Yusef's radical discourse ran afoul of Maiduguri's power structure and emulating the Prophet, he and his followers made *hijrah* to a remote northern border outpost. Relocating to rural Kannamma in 2002 Muhammad Yusuf created a community composed of unemployed Islamic schools graduates [who populate many northern states and cities]. These *almejeri* represent a *lost generation* committed to religiously inspired violence.[42] Yusef's veneration of the Taliban in his rural outpost and ultra-Salafist ideology engendered fierce criticism earning his Kannamma community the name "little Afghanistan."

Yusef's Wahhabi-inspired fundamentalism appealed principally to impoverished young men. His religious movement morphed into personal cult whose militant's fanaticism inspired mass protests against state governments and violent clashes with the police. The group's dispute with the state over fishing rights in 2003 erupted in major violence and a state crackdown on Yusef's movement. By 2004 BH was by most accounts dormant. Yusef fled to Saudi Arabia where his ultra-Salafism deepened and radicalized.[43]

The movement reemerged in 2007 where Yusef's militants attacked a traffic office in Kano and a police station in Sharada.[44] Returning that year to Nigeria Yusef preached his Salafist message in Yobe and Borno states rebuilding his movement among the talakawa commoner class. He developed a microfinance program and assisted commoners to develop their own businesses combining social incentives with ideological appeals.[45]

By 2008–2009 Maiduguri and Kano were major areas of BH support and traditional Muslim elites and Christian minorities began to feel the brunt of the movement's wrath. Frustrated by poverty, many young men were brought into BH's narrative of Islamic victimization and exploitation by corrupt *apostate* elites. Skirmishes with police followed and tensions reached a critical mass when police harassed BH militants on motorcycles going to a funeral for one of their members not wearing helmets. Attempting to force implementation of a recently passed helmet law police clashed with the bikers when they refused wounding a number of BH members.

Subsequent arrests of BH members inspired further violent resistance. The movement responded with attacks on police stations, military barracks, prisons and government buildings in Borno, Kano, Katsina and Yobe states. Following a presidential decree the army intervened. In late July 2009 the security forces crushed a BH-armed rebellion killing close to eight hundred of the group's foot soldiers and arresting their leader.[46] Turned over to the police for questioning Yusef was executed while in their custody. Like its Maitatsine precursor the government declared Boko Hara finished and the network appeared stagnant. In exile it would be revitalized and radicalized by Yusef's chief lieutenant Abubakar Shekau.

BH II: REBORN AND RADICALIZED

Under Abubakar bin Muhammad Shekau's leadership, the group has come raging back.[47] Thought killed in the 2009 violence, Shekau escaped police custody and recovered from his wounds. He has given the group a greater international focus, sectarian edge and a takfirist orientation. His stewardship of the BH fortified by AQIM support unleashed an ultraviolent terror campaign that departs considerably from its past assaults.

Nigerian jihadism's progressive extremism repeats cycles seen in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Libya. The defeat of previous extremist networks breeds a future generation committed to even more ultraviolent versions of jihad. Driven by frustration and revenge successive Islamist insurrections have become more radical and violent.

BH's evolving warfare doctrine enlarges the scope of its societal rejection [*al wala wal bara*], collectivizes *takfir* to expiate most Muslims and expands jihad in an offensive ultra-aggressive direction. BH's resurgence was facilitated outside Nigeria. Many of the group's militants escaped to Niger and Cameroon where jihadi support networks and sympathetic Kanuri populations welcomed them. Among those escapees were key leaders Abubakar Shekau, Yusef's son Khalid al-Barnawi and Mamman Nur who purportedly made contact with AQIM operatives in Niger and Mali.[48]

Some accounts speak to AQIM financial assistance to the organization and the training of its militants in Nigerien camps. AQIM leader Droukel in a June 2010 message pledged arms and training to BH in its war against

Christian crusaders making good on AQ's intent to achieve greater strategic depth in Africa.[49] Some members of Shekau's organizations even made it to Somalia to fight with AQAP.

Though the scope of AQIM assistance to the Shekau's network in exile is not clear, BH by 2011 had become a potent insurgent force. No longer restricted to gun battles against the police and the army, its revitalized network used IED, vehicle born improvised explosive devices (VBIED), rocket propelled grenades, kidnapping and martyrdom operations as part of its warfare repertoire.[50] Its targeting selection expanded dramatically to include Christian Churches, beer halls, shopping complexes, elections offices, mosques, Muslim clerics, local politicians and international agencies. Among BH's more notable early attacks were:

- A prison assault in September 2010 freeing over a hundred BH members
- Seven IED attacks in Jos during Christmas Eve 2010 celebrations killing seventy Christian worshippers
- Bombings of polling places to protest the April 2011 elections resulting in reelection of Christian president Goodluck Jonathan
- The use of suicide bomber destroying a UN building in August 2011 in Abuja killing twenty-three people
- Coordinated attacks on police barracks in November 2011 in Damaturu and Potiskum killing hundreds
- Christmas Day bombings in 2011 in Abuja killing forty-two worshippers
- Attacks in Kano in January 2012 against police stations and federal buildings killing one hundred and eighty-five people.[51]

The attack against the UN complex in Abuja was considered by some experts as a turning point in the organization's strategy suggesting a more internationalist posture.[52] BH websites promised to take the jihadist war to the Western *far enemy* that so far has been limited to taking European hostages.

In a July 2012 *YouTube* video Shekau calls Nigerian democracy "paganism" and urges Christians to recant their polytheism and convert to Islam.[53] Within secular society, BH ideologues argue, Islamic belief and

practice are perverted by Christian influences deepening the state of Muslim *jahiliyyah*.[54]

His solution to the spiritual crisis and economic servitude of Muslims is jihad to cleanse this impurity and restore genuine Sharia rule. Its brutal jihadist war is waged against security services, *apostate* Muslims and above all, the Christian minority. BH's call for Christians to vacate the north, its brutal sectarian attacks and fixation on Taliban rule is sadly reminiscent of Zarqawi's AQI. The destruction of Christian villages, bombing of churches and kidnapping of *infidel* children is key part of its terror strategy to break the strictures of the corrupt post-colonial state.[55] Shekau speech's venerates the Sakoto caliphate and aspires to establish a West African caliphate.

Shekau's takfirist stewardship of BH is not without controversy. Though he is the public face of BH, the network is more a confederation of competing camps that like AQIM are led by regional emirs. Resistance's to Shekau's targeting of ordinary Muslims and Christians was criticized by leaders like Barnawi and Nur. The breach became so attenuated in 2012 that moderates bolted from BH to form an alternative jihadist network.[56]

Barnawi's creation of Ansaru sought to challenge Shekau's overall direction of jihadist warfare and reorient the Islamist insurgency toward attacking security forces and targeting Western interests. Some analysts believe that Barnawi was acting under the AQIM's direction fearing Shekau's ultraviolent brand of Salafi-jihadism would alienate the Muslim population.[57] During its brief exit from BH's network Ansaru never effectively challenged Shekau's dominance and the two organizations cooperated to kidnap Westerners. The 2013 abduction of a French family vacationing in Cameroon is reported to be a BH-Ansaru joint operation.[58]

Violence in North Nigeria escalated sharply after BH's reorientation. Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports that BH attacks in 2014 resulted in the death of over two thousand people.[59] BH intends to cleanse Borno and Yobe states of their Christian populations by burning villages and establishing Islamic rule. Benefiting from illicit trade in the Lake Chad region BH extended its network to Cameroon border villages.

BH's April 2014 kidnapping of over two hundred and seventy Chibok school girls engendered international outrage.[60] It's bombing of churches, mosques and it's razing of Christian villages has been condemned by global

human rights organizations. Emulating the IS BH has declared a caliphate over northern-eastern Nigerian states and the Cameroon border area.[61]Its hybrid offensive operations include guerrilla tactics, terror attacks and conventional assaults. By 2014 BH expanded its terror-insurgent activity to neighboring Cameroon where its suicide bombing, IED, VBIED attacks killed over a thousand people.[62]

By late 2014 BH occupied considerable swaths of Borno, Yobe and Adammawa states hoping to establish some provisional governance. Like Baghdadi's organization, BH is committed to a takfirist sectarian strategy that eliminates "apostates" and "infidels" in its savage quest to purify the Muslim world and create a transnational Sharia state that erases colonial era borders. A 2016 *Congressional Research Service* study reports that since 2009 BH has killed over 15,000 people with some 6,500 persons dying in 2015 alone.[63]

The fighting furthermore has displaced millions in the Lake Chad region. Federal and local officials have responded to the BH assaults vigorously arresting and killing large numbers of BH militants. The Jonathan administration in 2013 declared a state of emergency in fifteen states affected by the group's violent campaign. The army creation of a Joint Task Force (JTF) has cooperated with police and intelligence services in the fight against the group.[64]

Abuja counterinsurgency strategy has gone through a number of iterations. The government since 2013 has embarked on a hybrid strategy to confront the BH insurgency.[65] Its formation of Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) has assisted the development of what critics have called vigilante groups to protect neighborhoods and villages.[66] Faced with a worsening security in Nigeria North the government has employed South African mercenaries in its *relentless pursuit policy*.

The government since 2013 has embarked on an amnesty program for repentant BH members who put down their arms. Abuja 2015 participation in multinational military operations with other West African countries (Multinational Joint Task Force—MNJTF) is designed to eradicate BH support networks in Cameroon, Niger and Chad and drive Shekau's network from its northern safe havens. Multinational operations against

BH's network hopes to emulate the success that French, Chadian and local forces had in destroying AQIM's 2013 nascent jihadist state.

THE JIHADIST REVOLT IN MALI

AQ's drive for strategic depth in West Africa has been assisted by calamitous events in Libya and Mali. AQIM had established good relations with Tuareg tribes in the Sahel assisting their smuggling operations and encouraging their ethno-tribal resistance against West African governments.[67] Some AQIM leaders have furthered this relationship by marrying the daughters of important Tuareg clansman.

Spread over Algeria, Mali, Niger and Libya the Tuaregs have rebelled on multiple occasions desiring to create an "Azawad" national homeland. Their last rebellion occurred in the early 1990s in Mali and was quelled by a Qaddafi brokered peace agreement.[68] The self-proclaimed "King of African Kings" reinforced his military capability by forming Tuareg militias, providing employment for thousands of impoverished young men.

These mercenaries were used by Qaddafi to combat the Libyan Spring 2011 revolt that eventually received armed Western support. Faced with NATO airstrikes and hostile Libyan rebels, thousands of heavily armed pro-Qaddafi Tuareg mercenaries streamed across the Libya's border into Mali.

The flow of arms and men into northern Mali altered the balance of power igniting a Tuareg revolt. The secular Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) rebel force joined with Islamist Ansar Dine and its allies and made substantial progress against government forces.

Angered by Bamako's lack of assistance to its beleaguered forces in north Mali fighting the Tuareg rebels and their jihadist allies the army seized power. The March 2012 military coup by rogue Malian army officers created a northern power vacuum.[69] With the dissolution of army units in the north, the rebels and their Islamist partners marched into Kindal, Goa and Timbuktu. By April, rebels had announced an independent Islamic Tuareg state.

Fighting soon erupted between MNLA and its Islamist allies. AD and MUJWA dislodged moderate Tuareg rebels consolidating Islamist control over the north. Described as a "*jihadist condominium*" by Spanish terror expert Fernando Reinares, AQIM, AD and MUJWA consummated a power

sharing arrangement aimed at creating a terror training sanctuary and a pure Sharia state.[70]

Such a jihadist alliance was extraordinary. AQIM and MUJWA have had conflicts over past policy. MUJWA formed in 2011 was part of AQIM breaking from the organization to chart a purely West African path of jihad.[71] Its leadership is predominately Mauritanian and it brandishes an ideology that combines black West African nationalism with jihad.[72] Some observers have argued that racial tensions between the black African MUJWA and the Algerian-dominated AQIM forced the separation, while others claim the split was over leadership and strategy issues. Whatever the real reason, it underscores AQIM's historic factionalism that has hindered its capacity as a terrorist-criminal enterprise.

Ansar Dine is a Tuareg-dominated Islamist militia led by Iyad Ag Ghali who had played an important role in past ethnic revolts. Known as *Defenders of the Faith* AD forged a relationship with MNLA in January 2012 and brokered AQIM reconciliation with MUJWA. Given its Tuareg support base Ansar Dine was the dominant group in this jihadist confederation.[73]

Historically, AQ has played a role in the region. AQIM's relationship with Tuareg tribes is based on partitioning lucrative smuggling routes. With its Tuareg roots AD's role within the rebel movement, furthermore, catalyzed revolutionary unity.

The alliance between AD and the MNLA militants did not last. By late April the Islamists violently displaced the MNLA transforming a separatist revolt into a quest for new West African Afghanistan.[74] AD and MUJWA rapidly secured major northern cities and their forces marched southward relatively unopposed. Regional governments and their French patron became increasingly nervous about jihadist advances in Mali.

Salafi-jihadist forces wasted little time erecting a Taliban-like state where a religious force enforced draconian punishments. Dispensing with the mirage of Tuareg independence, AD and their allies desecrated Sufi shrines, whipped alcohol users and stoned unmarried couples. Thieves had their limbs amputated without medical assistance, instruction in biology was forbidden and the population was brutally subjugated by a medieval system of justice.

AQIM and its allies brief exercise in jihadist rule in Mali foreshadows IS's grisly executions and wholesale destruction of pagan icons. Driven by a fanatical desire to eviscerate existing civilization and resurrect a new Islamist utopia, jihadists in Timbuktu, Gao and Kindal were in the early stages of moving toward a fifth wave movement. Their destruction of Sufi mosques, burial sites, shrines and historic ornate buildings in Timbuktu was roundly condemned by the United Nations and cultural organizations across the world.

AQIM had hundreds of men in northern Mali.[75] Under AD protection, they established terror camps and intensified recruitment efforts. AQIM's websites promise a new jihadist war against *Christian crusaders*. Crossing Niger BH militants traveled to Mali to link with their jihadist mentors. Some observers feared the creation of a jihadist safe haven stretching from southern Libya to Northern Nigeria.

Flush with millions of dollars obtained from hostage money AQIM had considerable financial means to assist the development of a West African jihadist state. The flow of heavy arms (including thousands of shoulder-fired missiles) into north Mali married with Islamist efforts to fend off the MNLA secular rebels and a weakened central government. AQIM erected training camps that attracted hundreds of jihadists that once empowered could further unravel state security across the region.

Brutal jihadist rule, however, proved unpopular, especially in the lower north where the Tuaregs were a minority. The Islamists application of Sharia ignited local protests as many chafed at Talibanesque rule. Jihadist dominance over north Mali created countervailing efforts. The destabilizing impact of the March 2012 military coup was short lived. Faced with international sanctions, rebellious army officers in April agreed to step down from power. Once disbanded military leaders joined forces with a UN brokered civilian transitional government.

Civilian rule in Bamako was fortified by regional efforts. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) readied a 3,000 man pan-African army to mount an invasion of the north. France spearheaded efforts to train this pan-regional force and provide logistical support. It soon, however, became apparent that such a force would not be capable for years. Events on the ground forced France to intervene.

THE FRENCH INTERVENTION AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE AQ-LINKED EMIRATE

Fears that a Salafi-jihadist-dominated state could spread jihad southward were vindicated by Islamist incursions into central Mali. By early January 2013 jihadists were moving against the capital. Panicked Mali's interim president called for French assistance. Faced with the logistical problems of preparing a pan-African force that would not be ready until fall 2013, Paris acted forcefully. The French intervention was facilitated by the country's forward positioning of thousands of troops and arms in neighboring countries and its knowledge of Mali's people and terrain.

Throughout the post-colonial period France had intervened extensively in Mali, Chad, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone in peacekeeping and stability operations. According to Christopher Chivis Paris's military intercession was driven by strategic and humanitarian concerns.[76] With some 8,000 French nationals living in Mali's capital the prospect of a jihadist conquest of the south invited immense human costs. The fragile state of Mali's military was insufficient to protect Bamako and its environs. Faced with little choice other than a haphazard and dangerous evacuation, France had to act. It did so rapidly with little consultation with its NATO allies. The American role was limited to the provision of supplies and logistical support.

France's *Operation Serval* [Wildcat] bombed rebel positions in the north. Paris' ground campaign aimed at securing towns around major highways in north. Particularly devastating were air strikes against an invading column of cars and pickup trucks the jihadists had amassed to invade the central region.[77] By late January 2013 Islamist bastions of Gao, Kindal and Timbuktu fell before the Franco-Malian troops who encountered scarce resistance. Anxiety that the Islamists would use shoulder fired rockets against French aircraft were not been vindicated. Troops were greeted enthusiastically by the local population that had been brutally suppressed by Islamist rule. Many of AQIM's supporters were killed in retaliatory attacks after French and Malian forces recovered the north. In his analysis of France's military campaign Christopher Chivis estimates over five hundred

AQIMs and aligned militants killed with French losing some eight soldiers killed and expending 647 million euros.[78]

The French paved a path for an assault against AQIM and Ansar Dine northern fiefdoms in the deserts and in the Infoghas Mountains. By March one of AQIM's historic leaders (Abou Zeid) had died in the fighting along the Infoghas mountain chain and his brigade was shattered by French airstrikes and Chadian ground forces.[79] Reaching close to four thousand soldiers the French hoped to disengage from Mali within the year. Such expectations proved wildly optimistic.

Since the destruction of its emirate the Islamists have mounted a protracted guerilla war against French-trained pan-African and UN stabilizations forces. *The Long War Journal* reports that AQIM-backed insurgency steadily increased its pace of attacks against Malian and international forces with jihadists mounted hundreds of assaults killing over fifty peacekeepers.[80] Islamist extremists have also extended their terror campaign to neighboring countries with high-profile attacks against hotels and beaches catering to Western tourists in Mali, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso.[81]

The battle to secure Malian security is far from over. Mali's north continues to be an insecure area with little resolution of underlying political antagonisms that gave rise to repeated Tuareg insurgencies. What is clear is that jihadist forces miscalculated. By moving against the capital they risked losing their northern sanctuary. Islamists forces fragmented in response to battlefield reverses. As seen elsewhere external military pressure unraveled jihadist ranks. Factions of Ansar Dine negotiated with Bamako, while others have continued their quest for a Sharia state.[82] Currently Islamist forces are rebuilding their offensive capability. AQIM and her allies have regrouped in Libya, Algeria and Niger where they have launched attacks against African troops and French mining interests.

Surprised by the rapidity and scale of France's military intervention, AQIM has regrouped to direct a regional terror and insurgent campaign. Though resilient they are unlikely to be able to reestablish their jihadi state. The United States 2015 agreement with Niger to establish a Predator drone base to assist French and African forces additionally weighs against a rapid Islamist resurgence. Shortly after the conclusion of Operation Serval Paris

has created a West African security architecture (Operation Barkhane) featuring five bases, thousands of troops and logistical hubs to assist regional governments fending off jihadist forces.[83] French forces now have a geographical infrastructure to strike extremists operating across the Sahel.

Having mutated from the failed GIA terror campaign in Algeria, AQIM has not learned past lessons. It continues to adhere to a dysfunctional totalitarian worldview that impels them into counterproductive actions. Such mistakes are inevitable for fanatics ignore the ramifications of their actions. With the fractured state of jihadist movements, leaders are often paralyzed in their inability to control the fanaticism of their midlevel leaders. Jihadi zeal paradoxically is a double-edged sword, explaining resilience and failure. Despite their best efforts, AQ has yet to find the mechanism to control recalcitrant leaders' intent upon the creation of a new Medina.

Ironically AQIM leader Abdelmalek Droukdel presciently advised his forces in Mali to relax their repressive rule in a July 2012 letter found by the Associated Press in Timbuktu.

In his missive he admonishes his militants and writes:

> Some of the examples where we feel you were hasty in applying Sharia…include… the destruction of the shrines…and the application of the had (religious punishment) in the case of adultery, in the lashing of people and the use of force to stop things are haram, and the fact that you have prevented women from going out, and prevented children from playing and searched the houses of the population…so your officials need to control themselves and commit themselves to the guide that we will elaborate here.[84]

Droukdel feared that AQIM's excesses would invariably invite Western military intervention ending the group's safe haven. His militants failed to heed his advice. Droukdel's complaints about his network's ideological extremism and penchant for counterproductive violence echoes bin Laden's concerns about the future viability of the AQ movement. Seized by US forces in their storming of the Saudi leader's Abbottabad compound, the historic leader's letters to the leaders of AQ branches in Iraq, Somalia,

Yemen and Iraq chastises them for the victimization of Muslims in their misconceived wars against *apostate* enemies.[85]

JIHADIST REVOLTS IN NIGERIA AND MALI: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Jihadist revolts in Nigeria and in Mali exhibit patterns seen in Egypt, Libya, Iraq and Syria. In each case a jihadist movements mobilized rapidly, radicalized, fractured and were *defeated*. Jihadi violence against civilians eroded the popular base of the Islamist revolt that when confronted by state pressure collapsed. The *defeat* of these Islamist insurrections, however, was temporary. The endurance of weak state structures, corruption, poverty and ethno-sectarian grievances in these countries were destined to catalyze violent revolts.

Frustrated jihadist forces remained resilient waiting for more propitious political circumstances to reignite their quest to topple apostate regimes, reverse *jahiliyyah*'s corrosive effects and create the institutional foundation for Sharia governance. They have increasingly amplified the level of violence resorting to collective *takfir* to justify their extremist agenda. It speaks tellingly to the spread of Salafi-jihadist ideology across the Muslim world that in Africa is rapidly displacing more tolerant Sufi traditions. Since the late 1970s coexistence between Muslim, Christian and animist communities is becoming rare. The role of Saudi Arabian finance in exporting Wahhabi doctrines combined with AQIM burgeoning network have played important roles in the diffusion of local jihadist organization across the Sahel. Most of these groups are aligned with AQIM or the IS with West Africa becoming an important battleground in the struggle between these two organizations.

Since the late 1970s, Nigeria has been beset by progressively more violent jihadist insurgencies. The destruction of the Maitatsine in the 1980s created the basis for an even more violent movement. BH's evolution from a protest movement under Mohammad Yusef mutated to an ultra-takfirist guerrilla insurgency dominated by Abu Bakr Shekau's fanaticism. The Tuareg secular insurgencies of the 1990s in Mali similarly gave way to Islamists radicals supported by AQIM in the twenty-first century. Despite important

government victories against Nigerian and Malian jihadi forces both countries continued to be plagued by jihadist violence.

The jihadi insurrections that rise, radicalize, collapse and remerge are more pronounced in Nigeria than in Mali. There are a number of reasons for this divergence. First, the historic memory of Don Fodio and the Sokoto caliphate continues to resonate with Nigerian Muslims. There is great respect for the warrior-preacher tradition that Fodio represents whose tradition Mohammad Marwa, Mohammad Yusef and Abu Bakr Shekau represent.

Second, Nigeria's north has historically been removed from secularizing forces. Colonial and post-colonial regimes ruled through Muslim feudal elites. The British, for example, preserved the Fulani aristocracy and Sharia governance. Abuja, moreover, did little to integrate the north's social and economic structure with the country's more economically dominant Christian south. The spread of democracy in Nigeria in the 1990s accelerated the north's Islamization by permitting Sharia governance. This deepened the north's isolation and exacerbated Kanuri and Hausa-Fulani grievances against the central government.

Third, Islamic education's dominance in the north produced religiously zealous students hostile to the Nigerian state and lacking the necessary literacy and work skills for upward social mobility. This outcome guaranteed an impoverished young underclass vulnerable to radicalization. Religious students and commoners formed the backbone of the Maitatsine and BH movements. Their provision of employment and the movement's exaltation of religiously inspired violence coalesced to attract a mass following securing a culture of permanent resistance.

Despite the Nigerian jihadist movements brutal insurgency it has not been able to secure sufficient control over territory to govern. The strength of the Nigerian state has prevented the creation of a jihadist emirate. With the exception of remote border areas around Lake Chad BH has not been able to undertake Sharia governance. Unlike Afghanistan in the early 1980s Abuja has never lost its capacity to govern major towns. Egyptian jihadists similarly have not been able to create emirates even in the historically lawless Sinai Peninsula.

This was not the case in the Mali. The collapse of the Malian army in the north allowed AQIM and their Tuareg Ansar Dine and MUJWA allies to

establish a jihadi state from April 2012 to the January 2013 French intervention. The Malian case presented jihadist forces with propitious but anomalous conditions permitting their temporary exercise of fanatical Sharia governance. Without Qaddafi's fall the Tuareg 2012 revolt is unthinkable. Once NATO intervened on behalf of anti-Qaddafi rebels, chaos rolled across the Sahel.

The flight of Qaddafi's heavily armed Tuareg mercenaries to their native land catalyzed a dormant Tuareg secessionist movement. Latching on to Tuareg rebellion, jihadist groups assisted their consolidation of power. Intent upon the creation of a jihadist emirate the extremist Ansar Dine and MUJWA displaced the secular Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). Bamako's meager assistance to its northern military garrisons left them ill prepared to withstand the rebellion enraging the military commanders whose frustrations were unleashed on the democratic regime. The March 2012 military coup in Bamako and the attendant political crisis forced international patrons to end aid programs whose resumption was conditioned on democracy's restoration. These exceptional circumstances left immense areas of the north uncontested permitting the jihadists to seize power.

HAS THE IS CHANGED WEST AFRICAN JIHAD?

Nigeria is fertile ground for the IS to expand its influence over the global jihadist movement. The historic memory of the Sokoto caliphate resonates in Muslim consciousness and the building of an Islamic emirate has been a BH goal. On March 7, 2015, BH leader Abu Bakr Shekau's Arabic language *Twitter* address posted on pledging bay'a to Baghdadi's network. His network hoped to garner international prestige with its caliphate association and benefit from IS's financial, technical and armed support.

Jacob Zenn argues that the union was precipitated by a number of factors.[86] First, the French 2013 military intervention in Mali weakened AQIM's financial and operational influence over Ansaru and BH. Denied AQIM support Ansaru had little choice but to reintegrate into BH's organization strengthening Sheakau's position. Second, Zenn argues former Ansaru militants played a key role in the merger. Central to his argument

was Ansaru's association with AQIM members who were influential in guiding BH's 2011–2014 media and propaganda operations.

When Baghdadi's organization began to challenge AQ's position within the global jihadist network many of these AQIM media experts defected to the IS. They would later facilitate BH's contacts with IS's Libyan network creating the conditions for the two organizations merger. Third, IS's incorporation of BH into its caliphate fits well into its *remaining and expanding* policy buttressing its position within the global jihadist movement and diminishing AQ's influence in Nigeria.

Other factors explain the union. BH's alliance with the IS makes ideological and operational sense. Since Sheakau's 2011 reconstitution BH has evolved into an Islamist *fifth wave terror movement*.[87] Its tactical and philosophical similarity to the IS is striking. The sheer size of BH's network comprised of tens of thousands of militants and its territorial expanse across Northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin enlarges the caliphate's sphere of influence.

The IS's ideology and strategy is more in sync with BH than AQ. Shekau's affiliation pledge was recognized by the caliphate's English language magazine *Dabiq* that labeled the network the *Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)*. BH's integration into Baghdadi's caliphate is not surprising. Despite its tactical and financial links to AQ, Boko Hara's sectarian and takfirist orientation under Shekau's leadership did not fit well into Zawahiri's *general guidelines* for jihad.[88]

Since its disagreement with Zarqawi's AQI's AQ has preached a *moderate* jihadist warfare doctrine that avoids sectarian targeting and the killing of Muslim civilians. This is at odds with Shekau's overall strategy. BH's hatred of Christians, *apostate* Sunnis and Nigeria's Shia minority resulted in attacks against churches, mosques, markets that targeted many civilians. Its annihilation of entire villages and sectarian slaughter violate Zawahiri's *general guidelines* that prioritize targeting of security forces and attacks against Western interests. Despite some kidnappings of Westerners and its 2011 attack against a UN conference in Abuja BH has principally a *near enemy* focus.

BH's fusion of Kanuri tribal identity and takfirist Salafi-jihadist warfare doctrine makes its brutal ethno-sectarian direction a palpable rallying force.

Without its tribal jihadist orientation BH is unlikely to have built a broad based movement in Kanuri dominated northern states. Since the 1970s Maitatsine movement Islamic revivalism has proved to be a potent force to mobilize tribal grievances and stoke sectarian hatreds. With its emphasis on the global *ummah* and its downplaying of tribal-sectarian animosities, Zawahiri's *general guidelines* are poorly suited in a society riddled with ethno-sectarian cleavages.

AQ's rejection of Shekau's takfirist stewardship may have played a role in dissidents breaking with BH in 2012 to form Ansaru.[89] Led by Khalid al-Barnawi Ansaru's 2012–2013 direction of jihad mimicked AQIM's targeting of security forces and its kidnapping of Westerners. During its 2009 post-Yusef exile Barnawi did have contact with AQIM's network and no doubt his exposure to it did exert some influence. AQIM could have hoped that Ansaru would weaken Shekau's position within BH redirecting the Nigerian jihad toward its *general guidelines*. This, however, never occurred.

AQIM's influence over BH's evolution, moreover, is limited. The AQ affiliate is credited with enhancing BH's 2010–2011 resuscitation after its flight to the Sahel. The training and financial assistance exiled BH's militants received under AQIM's direction in Niger did facilitate its offensive operations during its second incarnation. BH's use of suicide bombers, IEDs, VBIEDs and rifle-propelled grenades (RPGs) at the start of its 2010 offensive are AQ hallmarks. When BH attacked a UN conference in Abuja some analysts believed that the network's integration within AQ's umbrella organization would follow.

BH, however, never came close to merging into Zawahiri's network. Its sectarian discourse and ultraviolent strategy of targeting civilians mimicked Zarqawi's war against Iraqi Shia, Kurdish and Christian. Shekau's social media appearances emulate Zarqawi's gestures and style and the Nigerian's exaltation of brutal tactics and religious hatred are the antithesis of AQ's overall message.

Under Yusef's 2002–2009 direction, Shekau was known as an extremist who clashed with the mainstream leadership. During the army's brutal 2009 repression of BH, Shekau was wounded and he reorganized BH in exile into a takfirist insurgent organization. He has ruthlessly annihilated rivals

consolidating his power within BH's Shura council paving the organization transition to ultraviolent terror group.[90]

Shekau's leadership is dominant in the organization. Though rival leaders exist, he personifies BH ultraviolent takfirist approach to societal reorganization. Like Baghdadi's he built a cult like movement who unlike the Iraqi appears regularly in videos extolling jihadi violence. Shekau media presence symbolizes terror spreading fear and intimidation. Analyst Jacob Zenn believes Shekau's charisma serves the organization through the construction of mythic-unifying leader facilitating the organization's cohesion.[91]

THE IMPACT OF SHEKAU'S IS AFFILIATION

Despite the high-profile attention BH garnered with its integration within the caliphate's provincial system, the alignment has yielded little. BH has taken advantage of the IS's media and propaganda expertise.[92] Dominated by former Ansaru members BH communication's strategy has coordinated with the caliphate's Al Hayat and al Furqan media enterprises.

Rebranded the ISWAP the production quality of the network's videos has vastly improved. Many of these videos propound the IS's glorification of jihad and the virtue of living within IS caliphate system. BH militants, moreover, have linked with the Libyan branch of the IS. The increased presence of BH foot soldiers in IS former Libyan stronghold of Sirte was especially notable.

Beyond its important symbolism BH's integration into the caliphate's network may be a liability. Some analysts speak of BH's *buyer's remorse*.[93] Its association with the IS garnered adverse international attention reinforcing Western support for the Joint Multinational Task Force (JMNTF) military operations. Commencing in early 2015 JMNTF has succeeded in retaking large amount of territory in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe Province and disrupted BH's Lake Chad Basin network.[94]

By January 2017 the Nigerian military drove BH militants from their historic Sambisa Forest stronghold outside of Maiduguri. Key BH leaders like Abu Khalid al-Barnawi have been captured by security forces and hundreds of its foot soldiers have surrendered. Some observers report that

the organization's militants are malnourished, and Shekau's network is short of money and weapons.

The military reversals experienced by the organization has weakened Abu Bakr Shekau's control over BH's network and undermined the IS's support for his governance of its West African province. BH is increasingly fractured between contending leaders. In August 2016 the caliphate replaced Shekau as their *wali* [governor] with former Ansaru spokesman Abu Musab al-Barnawi.[95] Given Barnawi's past association with AQIM his selection as *wali* [governor] by IS is an odd choice.

Some explanations have been offered for the caliphate's leadership change in its West African operations.[96] First, Shekau's erratic personality may have undermined the caliphate's faith in his stewardship. Shekau often appears crazed in the network's videos often speaking of deceased US presidents that he will fight to the death. His verbose flamboyant style replete with an AK-47 by his side contrasts strikingly with IS's Caliph Ibrahim sparse and restrained appearances. Second, Barnawi control over BH media operations may have facilitated his contacts with IS in Libya leaving Shekau isolated.

Jacob Zenn argues that Barnawi may have undermined Shekau creating an opportunity for his promotion within IS's West African province.[97] His elevation has furthermore prompted speculation that the hierarchical positioning of former Ansaru members gives AQ an opportunity to displace IS's influence over BH. Some have gone so far as to suggest that Barnwai is an AQIM mole in Baghdadi's network that when the caliphate collapses he will switch his allegiance to AQ.[98] Even though the international coalition has destroyed IS proto-jihadist state in Iraq and Syria, there is no certainty that AQ would be able to capitalize on this development to redirect BH.

Zawahiri's network, moreover, is diffused with AQIM being his most fractured branch. It is poorly suited to exploit fissures within BH's movement that historically has been an autonomous group. Since IS influence over its West African province is more symbolic than substantive, AQ is unlikely to exert much leverage over its future direction.

Barnawi and Shekau's factions, moreover, continue to profess their loyalty to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Even if Barnawi is an AQIM *mole* Shekau's faction is the strongest within the network. His brand of jihadist

warfare is anathema to Zawahiri's doctrines. There is, moreover, little evidence that Barnawi has altered ISWAP operations along Zawahiri's jihadist warfare guidelines. He is unlikely to displace Shekau dominance over BH whose brutality remains unchanged by its fracturing.

Elected in late 2015 President Muhammad Buhari declarations that BH was *technically defeated* is optimistic. Past government pronouncement of BH's death have been consistently defied. Though it has lost its capacity to control territory its capacity to wage a terror campaign has been undiminished. Faced with sustained military pressure, BH was unleashed an unprecedented wave of martyrdom operations against bus terminals, refugee camps, markets and mosques. Civilians are the principal victims of this offensive.

The number of female suicide bombers used by Shekau's network has swelled dramatically to devastating effect. Since June 2014 BH has used a hundred and one female suicide bombers some as young as nine years old in attacks in Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon.[99] Among the most mortifying attacks were three female suicide bombers in January 31, 2015, who killed over sixty-nine refugees at an internally displaced person's camp and a December 2015 assault by two women martyrs who obliterated a Maiduguri mosque killing over thirty.[100]

Nigeria continues to confront weakened but resilient extremist organizations. Though Abuja defeated the Maitatsine in 1981 and degraded Yusef's BH in 2009, sustained elimination of jihadist threat elude security forces. The underlying conditions (poverty, tribal-religious hatreds, corruption and illiteracy) continue to be exploited by Shekau's BH. Like their Iraqi, Syrian, Egyptian and Libyan counterparts Shekau and Barnawi's quest to purify the *ummah* of *apostasy* and creating the foundations of authentic Sharia governance continues to be elusive forcing them to amplify their brutality in the service of a totalitarian utopian project. This cycle of jihadi frustration, defeat, revenge and resilience is no less apparent in Mali after France's destruction of AQIM's state-building enterprise.

MALI

France has a history combating Islamist terror. The 1990s Algerian civil war and Paris' support for Algiers fight against the GIA insurrection invited

retaliation. The GIA bombed the Paris metro in 1996 killing six people and one of their plots in 1994 to crash an Air France passenger jet against the Eiffel Tower was foiled by security services. For twenty years French interests have been targeted by jihadist groups across the Maghreb and Sahel.

Paris' participation in peacekeeping and stability operations in Chad, Sierra Leone and Mali have given jihadists an additional opportunity to strike. French mining operations and its expatriate population in the Sahel have been targeted by AQ and its allies.[101] AQIM has kidnapped dozens of French nationals and has been paid millions of euros in ransom money. AQ's Maghrebi network and its *Al Andalus* media outlet vows revenge for French military operations in Mali.[102]

Though AQIM, Ansar Dine and MUJWA were hurt by France's January 2013 military intervention, they have sustained an increasingly virulent insurgency in northern Mali. They have targeted Malian and international peacekeeping forces. The pace of attacks has, moreover, increased steadily in the past two years. The *Long War Journal* notes that in 2016 AQIM and its allies were responsible for over 250 assaults featuring IED, suicide bombers and mortar attacks that killed some 80 international peacekeepers.[103] Cities like Timbuktu. Kindal and Goa have borne the brunt of the jihadist insurgency. AQIM killed over seventy Malian security personnel in January 2017 in one martyrdom VBIED assault against a military base.[104] With its 2016 attacks against hotels and resorts catering to Western tourists in Mali, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso AQIM hopes to widen its network's tentacles.

The region, moreover, features an intense rivalry between IS and AQ. Given its strong position in Libya and Nigeria the caliphate would seem to be in superior position to mount a strong challenge to AQIM's historic dominance in Mali. This, however, has not materialized.

Such a result is surprising. The IS hoped to utilize its Libyan operations to expand in the region. It has found some success by drawing support from dissident factions in AQIM, Mourabitoun and MUJWA. Formed in fall 2016 the IS in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) hopes to become the dominant jihadist network operating in the Nigerien, Malian and Burkina Faso border area.[105] The group was formed by a dissident faction from Belmokhtar's

Mourabitoun that declared in May 2015 its fealty to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's caliphate. Created by Abu Walid Sahrawi his group's attacks in Burkina Faso and Niger in 2016 inspired enough IS confidence that it made him *wali* of its new Sahara province.[106]

MUJWA has similarly fractured into competing AQ and IS camps. Led by Amadou Kouffa the Fulani-based Macina Liberation Group (MLG) hopes to create a jihadist safe haven in central Mali.[107] Unrecognized by the caliphate Kouffa's network has not been able to successfully supplant AQIM dominant position. Responding to the rise of pro-IS dissident groups in the Sahel AQ has been able to stem their rapid growth through preemptive assaults on these factions and reconciliation measures.[108] The IS's failure to create a dominant jihadist infrastructure in the Sahel repeats outcomes seen elsewhere. AQ networks have successfully stymied the growth of IS groups in Somalia, Pakistan and Afghanistan through offensive and defensive measures.[109]

Hoping to blunt IS influence in the Sahel AQIM's 2017 consolidated its affiliated West African jihadi groups. Formed in March *Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin* (JNIM, Group of Supporters for Islam and Muslims) hopes to capitalize on the fraying of the ISs' regional network.[110] The new grouping is composed of AQIM's Sahara branch, the Macina Liberation Front, Ansar Dine and Al Murabitoon. It's emir jihadist Iyad Ag Ghaly sore bay'at to Ayman al-Zawahiri, following his guidelines for conducting Islamist insurgency.[111]

Consistent with the AQ leader's vision JNIM targets security services and Western regional interests. Significantly the inclusion of the Macina Liberation Front gives AQ's Saharan affiliate the capacity to strike across Mali with jihadi attacks increasing across the central region. JNIM wages its struggle against Bamako, UN peacekeepers and French military forces hoping to win popular support for its aim to develop a pan ethnic Islamic emirate.

The probable collapse of IS state-building project in Iraq-Syria may offer AQ continued opportunities to fracture the caliphate's West African position. This does not guarantee that it will be able to guide JNIM in its jihadi struggle nor keep the network cohesive. Jihadi groups (especially in West Africa) are notoriously fractious.

One should be cautious about overestimating AQ's capabilities. AQIM and its allies have not been successful in maintaining a cohesive organization. Their fractured networks reflect the centrifugal tendencies in a jihadist movement splintered by leadership, tactical and ideological rivalries. Mohktar Belmokhtar's past ephemeral allegiances epitomize these discordant tendencies. His network's JNIM incorporation is likely to be transitory.

Tuareg separatism, underdevelopment, corruption and illiteracy in the country's north continue to incubate insurgent movements. Despite the resurgence of jihadist violence in Mali AQIM's is unlikely for form a future jihadist safe haven. UN peacekeepers and French forces in the Sahel are capable of stymying any future Islamist state-building project. They are, however, unlikely to destroy the jihadist insurgency whose frustrations and zealotry guarantee its resilience.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria and Mali confront serious levels of jihadist violence. Three years after their April 2014 kidnapping over a hundred Chibok school girls are still BH captives. AQIM-related violence at Mali in 2016 increased by 150 percent.[112] Competition between IS and AQ-affiliated groups in the region has incubated terrorist violence. After the caliphate's mortifying November 2015 attacks in Paris AQIM launched assaults against hotels and beaches catering to Western tourists in Mali, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso.

The *Long War Journal* reports some two hundred and seventy-six AQ-linked attacks occurred in West Africa in 2017 alone.[113] Recently AQIM-aligned groups have expanded their terrorist campaign into central Mali.

Jihadists, however, have not been able to form viable emirates. Despite its efforts IS has not been able to establish effective governance in Nigeria or Mali. Provincial development in the Sahel lags behind the caliphate's Iraqi-Syrian model. Baghdadi's organization, moreover, has not been able to reverse BH's declining military position in Nigeria nor has it displaced AQIM as the dominant jihadist actor in the Sahel. The unraveling of IS's caliphate in Syria-Iraq may exacerbate this weakening.

Africa remains a significant and growing jihadist battleground. Jihadi groups present security challenges in Somalia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Libya

and Tunisia. The IS vision of a restored caliphate resonates strongly among the continent's extremists. BH efforts to resurrect a modern version of the Sokoto caliphate have been blunted by international and regional efforts. AQIM's 2012 state-building enterprise similarly was dashed by France's military intervention.

Yet the dream of a revived caliphate for jihadists persists. It has animated an unprecedented flight of foreign fighters into the IS's ranks and unleashed enormous global carnage. With an estimated five thousand European fighters IS and a network of *virtual planners* ran by French, British and American militants IS external operations are well positioned to hit the Western Homeland. They have done so repeatedly.

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Chapter 7

The Islamic State's Totalistic War against the West

This chapter concentrates on the jihadist struggle against the *far enemy* that now is a key part of Islamist *total war* strategy. Though analysts emphasize AQ's distinctive *far enemy* doctrine, historically jihadist warfare has targeted non-Muslim civilizations. The *near/far enemy* dichotomy may be largely irrelevant. Jihadism has progressed toward *total war* against all adversaries. Thomas Hegghammer's analysis of jihadi post-9/11 terror, for example, found extremist groups merge by maximizing the enemies they target to win new recruits and gain publicity.[1]

Jihadist integration of the *near* and *far enemy* doctrines reaches its greatest heights in the IS's external operations in the West that is a strategic component in its comprehensive war doctrine. Brian Fishman argues that the IS' emergence realizes AQ theorist Sayf al-Adl plan to attack multiple enemies to secure the formation of a Mideast jihadi state.[2]*Total war* is also embraced by Abu Musab al-Suri and Abu Bakr Naji's whose essays extol violence against the *near* and *far* enemy.[3] Al-Adl's plan to force Western Mideast disengagement sought the overthrow of *apostate* regimes hoping to create conditions conducive to an Islamist war against all non-Muslim civilizations.[4]

Such a grand strategy is unsurprising for *total war* has been part of Islamic military doctrine since Muhammad. Islamic war strategy divides the world into two rival spheres (*Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb*) where coexistence is transitory and where warfare is natural.[5] Truces made between Islamic States and their rivals are considered by the former as transitory. They are mere interregnums presaging later conflict.

Mary Habeck argues contemporary jihadist terror strategies are taken from Mohammad and his companion's military exploits. Islamic extremists have mythologized this *golden age* of military expansion.[6] Historically, jihadists have selectively targeted three different enemies to facilitate their *total war*and conquest strategy. Habeck argues that three groups—the *near enemy*, the *far enemy* and the *sectarian other*—have been targeted by jihadist movements whose selection of adversaries varies.

Jihadists often navigate across these three adversaries shifting their focus to the weakest enemy. Throughout much of the post–World War II period the *near enemy* doctrine dominated until AQ's focused on attacking the US homeland. In his letter to late AQAP emir Nasir al–Wuhayshi, OBL expresses frustration with jihadist's inability to overthrow the apostate regimes and that targeting US interests was essential to weaken regional states.[7]

The IS's multisided war against sectarian, apostate and foreign enemies is the culmination of jihadism's embrace of a *total warfare* strategy. This evolution has been building for over a generation. Executing a *total warfare* strategy was dependent upon creating an institutional edifice capable of acquiring the resources to mount such an ambitious enterprise. IS' rapid conquest of parts of Iraq and Syria afforded the jihadi network that financial capacity to direct this policy. By January 2015 the IS governed over six million people allowing it the financial windfall to recruit tens of thousands of fighters.[8] With advanced weaponry, ample financial resources and considerable manpower the caliphate could lash out at multiple adversaries.

The sectarian antagonisms raging in Syria, Iraq and Yemen and Iran's growing presence across the Mideast played effectively into the caliphate's anti-Shia strategy. So did millenarian intellectual currents that saw intra-Muslim conflict as a sign of impending apocalyptic conflict.[9] IS's emphasis on Islamic eschatology (contained in its e-magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*) assisted its recruitment efforts raising images of *Satanic* crusader forces headed toward a divinely willed defeat. The IS's nineteenth-century precursor Sudanese Mahdiyyah harbored similar fantasies of divinely mandated global conquest.[10]

The IS's war against the *foreign outsider* references past conquests in early Islamic history. Driven by religious zeal, greed and power politics

Islamic armies conquered the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century and spread across the Levant and North Africa enslaving pagans and subjecting Jews and Christian to Muslim authority and taxation.

The caliphate's publications speak favorably of *war booty* embracing the sexual slavery of Yazidi women and girls by evoking medieval Islamic practices.[11] Extolling the glory of the Andalusian caliphate's seven hundred year Spanish occupation the IS urges the reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula. Much of Spain is considered by IS as Allah's *rightful domain*.

With their Balkan's conquests the Ottomans hoped to rule over Central Europe. After failing to conquer Vienna in the seventeenth century the Ottoman Empire witnessed military reversals, territorial shrinkage and financial atrophy. The Empire's erosion after World War I led to Ataturk's 1924 liquidation of the caliphate.

Jihadist theorists view the Turkish Sultanate collapse as a consequence of its cultural assimilation of malign Western influences that rotted the *ummah* diverting the faith's preordained global conquest. Combating malignant Western influence and the crusader world's external aggression is an Islamist preoccupation. European acquisition of Ottoman territories across the Levant and North Africa contributed to the emergence of Islamist movements hoping to reverse Western influence. They see Western ascendancy as a threat to Islam's survival.

These beliefs contributed to Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's growth after the Ottoman collapse. Hoping to restore the caliphate and recover Allah's *lost lands*, the Brotherhood railed against Western induced apostasy. After World War II the British and French colonial empires were badly weakened.

Their erosion secured the success of Mideast national independence movements in the 1950s and 1960s. The post-colonial period created a power vacuum that groups contested. Secular revolutionary regimes were formed in Syria, Iraq, Algeria and Libya and the prevalence of Persian Gulf monarchies ted to Anglo-American economic-political power were viewed by Islamic radicals as furthering a nefarious neocolonial agenda. Combating the apostate *near enemy* complicit in the West's cultural rot of the Arab world thusly became a moral imperative.

The Pan-Arabist failure to destroy the Zionist presence in Palestine underscored the perfidious influence of their Western acculturation that

emboldened extremist efforts to defeat local regimes.[12] Islamism in the Arab world grew substantially after Israel's 1967 war victory and its territorial expansion. Confronted with a growing Islamist threat, Mideast regimes mostly prevailed. Islamist insurrections in Syria and Egypt during the 1980s were decisively defeated as were jihadi revolts against the Algerian and Libyan regimes a decade later. The failed jihadi insurgencies invited soul searching among Islamic extremists.[13] Such reverses were invariably juxtaposed with mujahidin *victories* against Russian forces in Afghanistan. The Soviet defeat suggested that focusing on the *far enemy* may be a more propitious path to total victory.

The Cold War's end and America's emergence as a lone superpower renewed jihadi attention to on pursuing a *far enemy* doctrine.[14] This development was reinforced by foreign aggression in Kashmir, Bosnia and Chechnya all viewed by jihadists as *crusader ventures* victimizing Muslims. Frustrations with jihadi inability to defeat the *near enemy* coincided with increased US involvement in the Mideast facilitated the rediscovery of a *far enemy* strategy. Emboldened by the Arab Afghan's *victory* over Soviet forces in Afghanistan and enraged by Saudi complicity in America's 1991 Gulf War AQ redirected the jihadi war against the *far enemy*.

The 9/11 attacks' failed to force an American Mideast disengagement and the liquidation of AQ's Afghan sanctuary fragmented AQ's network resulting in a diffuse jihadi network that targeted multiple enemies.[15] After the Arab Spring geopolitical conditions weakened native regimes and the growth of Iranian influence in the region contributed to a resumption of a jihadi *total war* strategy that was dramatically realized by the IS's formation.

This chapter provides an assessment of how jihadist *far enemy* strategy has unfolded. It begins with an examination of its origins, proceeds with AQ's reformulation of the doctrine and ends with the IS campaign of terror directed against the West. It underscores that the IS's external operations against the Western *far enemy* represents the full realization of jihadi *total war* doctrine.

Frustration, desperation and anger over failing to defeat the *apostate* adversaries accelerated jihadist extremism. Reformulated by the IS jihadi *far enemy* doctrine aspires to stab, burn, behead, beat, shoot, crush

Westerners by any means possible. IS' comprehensive effort at inspiriting and directing (operationally and virtually) attacks is without precedent. This development features prominently in the chapter's conclusions. Other factors, furthermore, contributed to this reorientation.

AQ's targeting of transport systems to inflict mass carnage was designed to force Western powers to disengage from the Mideast. The 9/11 attacks, however, widened the level of American involvement in the Muslim world and accentuated its support for *apostate* regime. The strengthening of the *far* and *near* enemy nexus contributed to a jihadist doctrine of *totalistic war* that is driven by historically engrained cultural and religious hatreds.

The sectarian passions generated by the Syrian civil war and the utopian appeal of IS' version of jihadism have facilitated the caliphate's *total war* doctrine and maximized its global appeal to Islamic extremists. Tens of thousands of extremists have flocked to the Levant to join the caliphate's divinely ordained struggle. IS's intent to carry out its prophetic mission has pronounced historical roots.

THE EVOLUTION OF JIHADIST FAR ENEMY STRATEGY

Though considered innovative AQ's *far enemy* doctrine is imbedded in the history of jihadi warfare. Bernard Lewis, Walid Phares and Ephraim Karsh point to Islam's *demonization* of the non-Muslim *outsider* that impels the faith to resist, confront and conquer its adversaries.[16] The religion's separation between *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* justifies divinely sanctioned warfare to expand the Muslim faith. Though Islamic military behavior is rationalized as *defensive jihad* it is a mere pretext for imperial conquest.

By the Middle Ages Islam stretched from Spain to Indonesia. By the eighth century Islamic armies penetrated into central France. They were beaten by Charles Martel's forces and forced back to their Spanish sanctuary. The Umayyad caliphate's presence in Spain remained for seven hundred years. Resenting its *lost* AQ and IS militants clamor for its reconquest. This sentiment played a role in the 2004 Madrid and 2017 Barcelona attacks to be explored later in this chapter.

Islam's military expansionism should, however, not mask the violent divisions that have plagued the Islamic world. Nelly Lahoud study of the

seventh-century Kharijites makes clear that militant groups challenged the legitimacy of Muhammad's immediate successors.[17] Though the IS chafes at its critics who compare its movement to the Kharijites, they share an uncompromising religious devotion to Mohammad's Medina community and oppose that which deviates from Islam's most early expressions.

The Kharijites jihadist militancy paled when compared to the intra-sectarian fissures generate by Ali's unsuccessful effort to assert his rightful claim as Mohammad's son-in-law to rule over the *ummah*. Ali's failure to resist Mu'awiyah bid to lead the caliphate led to his assassination by supporters who felt betrayed by his capitulation setting the stage for today's sectarian antagonism. The martyrdom of Ali's son Husayn at the battle of Karbala in AD 680 echoes prominently in battle cries of Shia militias fighting the IS and AQ.

Employing *defensive jihad* the eleventh-century Shi'ite assassins engaged in *total war* doctrine attacking European crusaders and Sunni rulers.[18] The Ottoman conquests from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries continued this process of Islamic military dynamism. Despite their multicultural penchant for indirect rule the Ottomans combated extremist movements some of whom evoked IS-like apocalyptic motifs.

The Mahdists revolts predate the IS's jihadist campaign by two centuries. The movement was based on eschatology rooted in Mohammad's *prophetic* ruminations that Allah would send a *rightly guided* emissary [the Mahdi] during a time of intra-Muslim conflict [fitnah] to mount an apocalyptic war against the Byzantine Empire. The Mahdi's emergence would be accompanied by Jesus' descent to earth to secure Islamic victory over the Romans and conquer the globe.[19]

Inspired by *end times* prophetic imagery Mahdist movements revolted against the Ottomans throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the exception of the Sudanese revolt most were unsuccessful. Having liberated the Sudan from Ottoman-Egyptian *apostasy*, self-declared *Mahdi* Mohammad Ahmad sought to conquer Rome. Like the Islamic State the Mahdiyyah was driven by a *total war* doctrine to purge Islamic *apostasy* and expand Allah's *rightful domain.* [20]

The Mahdiyyah's *total war* strategy sentenced it to annihilation. The Mahdi's successor caliph Abdullah's apocalyptic jihadi state was defeated

by a British expeditionary force and their Ottoman-Egyptian allies. Conceptually Islamic *total war* doctrine implies multiple conflicts but has been selectively applied in practice often focusing on the weakest enemy.

This explains *near enemy* targeting during most of post–World War II period. Jihadi hatred of *apostate* Muslim regimes was, however, not far removed from their hostility toward foreign aggressors. After decolonization Western support for Mideast regimes accentuated Islamist resentment and drove their fight against the *near enemy*. The transition from attacking the *near* to the *far enemy* would not be great.

Islamists resent the West because they see it as the source of the *umma's* corruption. In his year studying US education in Greeley, Colorado Sayyid Qutb was horrified by the moral laxity of the American people.[21] Qutb saw the secular West as devoid of moral values. Unmoored from Christian morality Qutb believed that Western civilization was spreading sexual hedonism, selfishness and greed across the world, elevating man's basest desires above God's divine morality.[22] The diffusion of Western cultural, legal and political precepts across the Muslim world, he thought, created a state of *jahiliyyah* denying the *umma* Sharia's divine perfection.[23]

Israel's presence in the Arab Mideast also drove Islamist *far enemy* hatred. Islamists see the Zionist state as a Western neocolonial project. This association was exacerbated by French and British participation with Israel's 1956 war to seize the Suez Canal. The war raised Islamist suspicions that the West harbored predatory designs on the Mideast.

America's support for Israel after the 1967 *Six Day War* accelerated anti-US resentment. The conflict, moreover, discredited Nasser's Pan-Arabist project intensifying Islamist desires to overthrow Mideast secular governments. They reckoned the removal of these *corrupt* states could be the foundation for a war of annihilation against the Zionists. Islamist revolts in the 1980s and 1990s, however, were defeated in Egypt, Syria, Algeria and Libya. American support for Cairo's brutal repression of the jihadi movement after its 1979 peace deal with Israel reinforced the *near* and *far enemy* nexus.

Jihadist theorists believed that a revolution against regional states would revive a caliphate to destroy Zionist occupation of Palestine.[24] Egyptian jihadist Mohammad Faraj, for example, believed regime decapitation could

ignite populist revolts. He was mistaken. Sadat's 1981 assassination instead fueled popular revulsion and state repression of jihadist networks. Faraj would be hanged for his complicity in Sadat's assassination. Subsequent efforts to kill Sadat's successor Hosni Mubarak had comparable results.

Failing to ignite populist revolutions jihadists turned against *apathetic* masses. Jihadi disappointment with a lethargic populace undermined the *near enemy* doctrine.[25] Events in Afghanistan, alternatively, fueled jihadi optimism that attacking the *far enemy* could be a more propitious strategy.

The Russian invasion of Afghanistan and its support for its Afghan communist proxy ignited revulsion across the Muslim world. Thousands of Arab fighters flocked to Afghanistan to support their Muslim *brothers* against the Russian *infidel.* This foreign fighter migration is testimony to jihadism's ability to consolidate Muslim solidarity by exploiting xenophobic hatreds. Despite their marginal contribution to the defeat of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, Arab participation in the Afghan jihad was mythologized fueling a desire to lash out at foreign interests. After Afghanistan, jihadists searched for future combat zones where an international expeditionary force could defend the *umma*.

Iranian Islamist success in overthrowing the US supported regime led by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1979 and Islamic student seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran furthered jihadi sentiments to mount an assault against a vulnerable far enemy. Political development in the 1990s also led to a *far enemy* concentration by jihadist forces. The repression of Chechen and Bosnian Muslims suggested, moreover, that Islam was threatened by an insidious *far enemy* conspiracy.

The Persian Gulf War reified anti-American resentment fueling the suspicion that *apostate* regime resilience was tied to US economic and military patronage. The US military presence in the Saudi Kingdom after the first Gulf War strengthened the jihadi movements desire to challenge American interests in the region. The religious sanction given by the Saudi *ulema* legitimating the presence of Western troops enraged jihadi theorists buttressing their conviction that Saudi Arabian regime was *apostate*. Within this context AQ's renewed focus on the *far enemy* was rational.

AQ'S FAR ENEMY "INNOVATION"

AQ pursuit of its strategy to attack the United States was part of a larger struggle to root out apostasy and fortify the *ummah*. Hoping its 9/11 attacks would force a US disengagement from the region. Bin Laden believed that the elimination of American support for *near enemy* regimes would weaken them sufficiently making them vulnerable to jihadist insurrections.[26]

Driving AQ's strategy was a belief that post-Vietnam America had little stomach for sustained combat and was unwilling to accept significant battlefield deaths. President Ronald Reagan's 1983 withdraw of US Marines from Lebanon after Hezbollah's Beirut embassy and barracks bombings repeated by Bill Clinton's 1993 disengagement in Somalia after the notorious "battle of Mogadishu" reinforced AQ's view of American weakness.

The Clinton administration unwillingness to undertake sustained military action against AQ after the network's attacks against US interests in Kenya, Tanzania and Yemen, furthermore, reinforced bin Laden's view of America weakness. Though Fawaz Gerges rightly emphasizes AQ's *far enemy* strategy as exceptional, the network's attacks against US interests were in the service of a historic *total war* doctrine.[27] Fully realized bin Laden's strategy aspired a Mideast caliphate to launch a war of destruction against all non-Muslim civilizations. AQ's grand strategy is consistent with the historical trajectory of Islamic military doctrine.

AQ hoped that its 9/11 *Holy Tuesday* operations would devastate the United States resolve to remain militarily engaged in the Mideast. Planning for the 9/11 attacks took years and was part of a larger plot to attack US air traffic on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.[28] Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri scaled down Khalid Sheik Mohammad's more robust plan focusing on the economic and military symbolism of attacking the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Trained in AQ camps in Taliban ruled Afghanistan nine jihadists diverted four passenger planes, three of which hit their targets in devastating fashion. Watching the Twin Towers collapse AQ's historic leaders saw it part of a larger design to propel American disengagement in the region. The death of nearly three thousand people in New York and Washington, instead, strengthened American military involvement in the region. By most accounts AQ and the Taliban were surprised by the fierce American

military response and were poorly prepared to withstand the US counterterror operations.

Analyzing the collapse of Taliban and AQ military ranks during the American 2001 military campaign Abu Musab al-Suri saw their defeat as a consequence of hierarchical organizations vulnerable to conventional military firepower.[29] Though bin Laden and Zawahiri were able to flee to Pakistan after the battle of Tora Bora, AQ's network was severely degraded and thousands of its militants were killed.

Desperate to inflict another catastrophic blow against the America, AQ has directed and inspired numerous plots. Most have failed. Efforts to attack Anglo-American air traffic in 2006 were disrupted by British police and US post 9/11 security transportation measures have proven difficult to surmount.[30] AQ's Waziristan-based external operations, moreover, were degraded by America's assassination of key operational commanders and general managers.

Bin Laden was so concerned about the effectiveness of the American-armed Reaper and Predator drone airstrikes in Waziristan that he contemplated moving operations elsewhere.[31] With its senior commanders Abu Yahyah al-Libi, Abu Miqtad al Masri, Abd al-Rahman al-Yemeni, and Atiyah abd al-Rahman killed in Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) airstrikes AQ Central found it difficult to mount external operations.[32]

Partnering with other networks and local jihadists AQ found greater success hitting European mass transport systems. Though initially seen as *homegrown* terrorism the 2004 Madrid train and 2005 London subway bombings were, however, directed by AQ Central in Pakistan and carried out by European jihadists.[33] These attacks have proved to be the networks most successful post 9/11 assaults against Western homeland. Since this London bombings AQ's Pakistani-Afghan network has degenerated and its efforts to reignite a *far enemy* strategy have been mainly carried out by its regional affiliates.

Its Yemeni AQAP branch has engineered some attacks against the West. The network is connected to plots to assault US passenger aircraft and has initiated some attacks against the American homeland. Historically, the network's origins lie in Saudi Arabia. Several years after the 9/11 attacks AQ executed a terror campaign against the Kingdom targeting international

workers compounds and petroleum facilities. Dozens of foreigners were killed in the 2003 attacks.

AQ's terrorism aimed to destroy the Saudi regime's economic base. With its lucrative oil industry threatened the Kingdom's security services responded severely. Hundreds of AQ militants were detained and killed and the badly degraded network relocated to Yemen where state authority was weak and lawless regions plentiful. Protected by local tribes AQ's Yemeni branch was relatively secure.

Unique among AQ affiliates the network does have a credible *far enemy* strategy that seeks to (1) blow up a passenger jet bound for the US homeland and (2) encourage Western jihadist sympathizers to attack their native lands. Spearheading this project were two personalities who mixed technical skill with ideological inspiration. Known as AQ's *bomb maker* Ibrahim al-Siri was involved in numerous disrupted attacks employing PETN explosives.[34] In 2009 he attempted to assassinate Saudi security official Prince Muhammad bin Nayef (now the Kingdom's Crown Prince) and bring down a Christmas day Northwestern Airlines passenger jet bound for Detroit, in 2010 he placed explosives in printer ink cartridges in a US destined cargo plane and in 2012 he was connected to a plot to smuggle nonmetallic explosives past airport security check points.

AQAP's American born ideologue Sheik Anwar al-Awlaki, moreover, used social media to recruit jihadists and he designed its English language magazine *Inspire* aimed at convincing Western jihadists to attack their home countries. Awlaki's on-line communications and his English language sermons, moreover, play a role in the IS s' more robust and sophisticated cyber radicalization program.[35]

Awlaki recruited Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab who hoped on Christmas Day 2009 to bring down Northwest Airliner but failed to ignite an Asiri's designed PETN-based explosive device. The American-born cleric's electronic communications with Major Hassan Malik Nidal inspired him to kill thirteen of his fellow military servicemen at a Texan military base. The Fort Hood shootings represent AQAP's greatest success in attacking the US homeland.

With his role in AQAP's external operations branch the US government prioritized Awlaki's killing. Since 2009 the US and Saudi campaign

disrupted the terror networks external operations. UAV strikes have killed large numbers of AQAP commanders and ideologues including Anwar al-Awlaki in 2011 and Nasir al-Wuhayshi who served as AQAP's emir and AQ's general manager four years later.[36]

AQAP's inability to assault the US homeland has invited some frustration and desperation. Its current emir Qasim al-Raymi, for example, now advocates small scale attacks by the networks Western sympathizers.[37] Yemen's multisided civil war that pits Iranian supported Shia Houthi rebels against government forces and a United Arab Emirates (UAE) expeditionary army has, moreover, diverted AQAP toward fighting local adversaries. Confronted by government forces and Houthi rebels AQAP has reverted primarily to a *near enemy* focus.

Though linked to attacks to the Boston Marathon attack in 2013, the assault against the Charlie Hebdo editorial offices in Paris and the killing of ROTC recruiters in Chattanooga two years later the network's connections to these attacks are weak. AQAP's prioritization on fighting local adversaries is furthermore consistent with AQ's post *Arab Spring* policy.

Bin Laden saw significant opportunities for AQ's advancement after populist revolts in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria and Bahrain. Hailing it as a "significant event" bin Laden hoped the Arab Spring could reignite the jihadist cause in the region.[38] With its renewed focus on the *near enemy* and its degraded external operations network, AQAP's most significant impact may be the prominence of Western jihadists in its external operations branch. Though AQ had an American born convert Adam Gadahn as its media adviser, he was never a part of its external operations branch. AQAP, however, allowed Awlaki to craft its media and terror operations.

Awlaki's prominence plays a role in the IS's use of Western jihadists. Despite its hostility to AQ the IS's adopted Awlaki's sermons and venerated his teachings.[39] IS' use of Awlaki's writings to motivate its followers reflects a cross hybridization of jihadi sympathies among IS sympathizers who flexibly navigate across contending groups. Discussed later American jihadists often have mixed organizational allegiances.

Crosscutting extremist loyalties merge well with the political turmoil raging in the Arab Mideast, creating multiple enemies that navigate across the *far/near/sectarian enemy* divide. Within this volatile context jihadist

proclivity toward pursuing a *total war* doctrine is reinforced. Post Arab Spring Shia-Sunni antagonisms in the Levant and the Persian Gulf combine with the unmooring of American supported *apostate* Arab regimes facilitated the IS's *total war* campaign. IS' ambitious external operations have been aided by multiple social media forums secured by encrypted technology. Ironically the IS has been instrumental in reigniting a faltering *far enemy* doctrine. Of late its external operations to attack the Western homeland have eclipsed AQ's enfeebled efforts.

THE IS'S REINVIGORATION OF THE FAR ENEMY DOCTRINE

Initially terror analysts were divided on IS' interest in attacking the West. Some concluded that the IS had a *near enemy*-sectarian agenda far removed from attacking Europe or America.[40] They viewed the caliphate's multilingual messaging expressed across social media forums of an apocalyptic war with the West as mere propaganda.

This viewpoint underestimated the inspirational appeal of IS' extremist ideology. The caliphate's synthesis of apocalyptic, sectarian and takfirist motifs had a powerful resonance among alienated Western extremists. The flow of tens of thousands of foreign fighters to the Syria and the savagery of the civil war are vivid testimony of the passions generated by millenarian and intra-confessional messages. Increasingly the importance of Islamist ideology as a driver of jihadi fanaticism is being recognized by terror experts.[41]

IS' success in executing its *far enemy* strategy was made clear by a 2016 US congressional study reports that since 2014 there have been 101 ISIS-linked plots launched against the Western countries.[42] IS attacks have killed more than 273 people in Europe.[43] The terrorist danger is severe in France, Belgium, United States, Britain and Germany. These countries have experienced the most attacks and plots.

British security forces, for example, were able to foil over a dozen IS plots since 2014 until Khalid Masood's March 2017 vehicular and knife attacks in Westminster that killed five people. Shortly after Masood's attack IS media channels venerated his assault declaring him a "soldier." The IS followed up its assault against the United Kingdom when one of its

“soldiers” Salman Ramadan Abedi in May 22, 2017, ignited an explosive device in his backpack killing twenty-two people (many of them children) attending a concert in Manchester. Abedi, moreover, has been linked with’ IS network in Libya who may have equipped him with bomb making skills.[44]

IS continued its assault on the United Kingdom the following month when three IS inspired terrorists driving a van ran over pedestrians, exiting the vehicle knifing people in nearby Borough Market. After eight minutes of carnage they killed seven people and wounded forty-eight others before being gunned down by the police. Shortly thereafter IS’s *Amak News Agency* claimed responsibility for the attack.[45]

Though 1,600 terror suspects have been arrested across Europe IS’s sympathizers continue their attacks.[46] Some analysts worry that IS’ terror campaign could intensify as the organizations proto-jihadist state in Iraq-Syria unravels.[47] Even as the caliphate’s unraveling IS’ sympathizers in 2017 launched attacks in Stockholm, London, Manchester, Barcelona and Paris.

IS employs multiple methods to compromise North America and European security. Some assaults involve overseas trained and financed attack teams like those that killed 130 people in Paris on November 13, 2015. Employing firearms and explosive devices these attacks have been the most lethal in IS’s terror campaign. Yet they are but a small part of IS overall assault against the West.

An even greater concern is the number of supporters who have been *inspired* by IS propaganda to kill Westerners. Some of these attacks have produced mass casualties. Encouraged by IS’ pleas to attack the West two *homegrown terrorists* killed thirteen people in San Bernardino, California in December 2015 and one IS-affiliated extremist killed in forty-nine persons at the *Pulse* nightclub in Orlando, Florida a year later. Though these assaults used conventional firearms, other IS inspired attackers have used knives, axes, suicide explosive vests and most prominently trucks. Driving a nineteen ton cargo truck into a crowd celebrating Bastille Day in Nice one sympathizer killed eighty-six people in July 2016 while another of IS acolyte drove a truck into a Berlin Christmas market in December of 2016 killing twelve persons. Tunisian jihadist Anis Amri posted a video on-line

pledging his loyalty to IS after the Berlin attack.[48] The caliphate's sympathizers in Catalonia launched a series of attacks of vehicular assaults in Barcelona and the seaside resort of Camprils in August 2017 killing fifteen people and wounding hundreds. Had the twelve person cell's original plan to use vehicular bombs not been disrupted by a premature explosion in their Alcanar safe house that killed three of the jihadists, the death toll would surely been higher.[49]

What the caliphate has not achieved through trained assassins and ideological exhortation it has *virtually directed* operations by guiding its supporters to kill Westerners. This *remote control* terrorism has a network of *virtual planners* who communicate with the caliphate's supporters through encrypted technology. Research done by Daveed Gartenstein-Ross indicates that English and French speaking jihadists have been particularly prominent in IS *virtual planning* network.[50] Working for IS French jihadist Rachid Kassim in June 2016 directed one extremist that decapitated a police captain and his companion in a town near Paris and two others that beheaded an elderly priest in rural village the following month. Both acts were accompanied by IS fidelity pledges by the attackers before their deaths in police shootouts.

French police disrupted a Kassim directed plot featuring teen girls who wanted to attack a train station by igniting improvised explosive devices. Underlying his significance Kassim was killed in a coalition airstrike targeting IS' virtual operations network. *Virtually directed* and *inspired attacks* have been executed in the United States. Prior to their killing in an American air strikes English speaking militants Junaid Hussein and Abu Issa al-Amriki directed sympathizers in America, Britain and Australia encouraging acts of violence. Hussein, for example, coaxed two American jihadists to attack an event featuring Muhammad cartoons at the *Curtis Cutwell Center* in Garland, Texas in May 2015. Though a policeman killed the attackers the Garland Plot was IS first serious effort to convince its supporters to kill Americans on their own homeland.

IS features its attacks in its English, French, Turkish and Russian e-magazines congratulating its *martyrs* for their killings of Western *apostates*. The English based *Dabiq* and French language *Dar al-Islam* featured Paris attack ringleader Abdelhamid Abaaoud and Brussels attackers Khalid and

Brahim el-Bakraoui presenting them as model *soldiers* whose actions should be emulated. IS' *Amaq News Agency* dramatized these attacks as foreshadowing IS' impeding victory over the West.

The reasons for IS-related violence in the West are little contested. Among the reasons proffered by analysts are Syria's civil war and the IS's *plebian jihadism* that *is* disseminated to supporters across a *virtual* network.[51] With its underlying sectarian antagonisms Syria's civil war that pits Sunni rebels against an Alawi dominated regime has attracted many Western jihadists to the IS's extremist ideology. Some 5,000 Westerners have traveled to Syria to support the jihadi cause.

Many of these jihadists were committed extremists before they traveled to fight the Assad regime. The civil war's carnage has only intensified their religious fanaticism that has swelled the IS's ranks. Without the estimated thirty thousand foreign fighters who traveled to the Mideast it is unlikely that the IS could seize terrain in western Iraq and eastern Syria to declare its *caliphate*. The caliphate declaration and IS *end times* ruminations of a final prophetic battle against evil have galvanized many young jihadists.

Described as *plebian jihadism* the IS's ideology synthesizes apocalyptic, takfirist, and Wahhabi influences. It has many *fifth wave* terrorist characteristics. This ideological configuration has attracted tens of thousands of extremists. Many live in the West and have little knowledge of mainstream Islamic practices. The caliphate's social media network relays its worldview simply and venerates brutality and violence. The caliphate's *hip hop* stylish videos are perfectly suited to entertainment genres familiar to young people. Alienated by Western culture and anxiously seeking an alternative communal identity some European and North American Muslims identify with IS's cause. The San Bernardino and Orlando attackers pledged support for IS' Emir Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

One way to envision the IS threat is to compare it to AQ now degraded attack network. Since its 9/11 attacks in the United States and its 2005 London subway and bus assaults AQ's external operations branch has withered. With its key leaders killed in drone strikes or Special Forces raids in Pakistan and Afghanistan, AQ's offensive capabilities have declined forcing it to rely on its Yemeni affiliate to launch attacks against the West.

Since 2009 AQAP's external branch has also been degraded by intelligence and kinetic operations. The organization has not mounted a serious operation to attack the US homeland since 2011 and its principal success has been through ideological inspiration. Compared to IS assault against the West AQAP's *far enemy* strategy has yielded meager results. It has been linked to the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing that killed three people and has nebulous connection to the January 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* attack in Paris that killed 13 people. Significantly Said and Cherif Kouachi had to borrow funds from an IS terrorist to mount the *Charlie Hebdo* attack.

The prominence of Awlaki's writings among young English speaking jihadists convinced IS to adopt him. Increasingly many young Western extremists have cross hybridized jihadist sympathies often gravitating toward the most powerful group. The San Bernardino terrorist Syed Rizwan Farook and Orlando Killer Omar Marteen switched their allegiance from AQAP to IS when Baghdadi's group achieved greater prominence.

Their adoption of IS' worldview is hardly surprising. IS' radical ideological discourse, *hip hop* video style propaganda and its exaltation of brutality speaks to the predominately young male jihadist populations residing in the West. AQ's reliance on geriatric ideologues counseling *moderation* and *consensus* has not served it well in reaching out to young jihadists eager to wage merciless warfare. Ironically IS has been more successful at implementing AQ's strategy to attack Western homeland and realized its grand ambition to form a Mideast jihadi emirate.

The next section examines IS *directed, virtual* and *inspired* operations to kill Westerners. It contains three key parts. First, it examines the caliphate's media and external terror operations. The role of Abu Muhammad al-Adnani and the caliphate's *Amniyat* security apparatus is discussed. Second, it conceptualizes IS *directed, virtual* and *inspired* operations and why they have proven so effective. Some of these *inspired* operations involve *lone wolf* terrorists with multiple jihadist allegiances that navigate across terror networks. Third, it assesses at the future of IS terrorism in its *post-caliphate* stage.

The conquest of Mosul and the destruction of IS' administrative capital in Raqqa, Syria has effectively eradicated the organizations state building project. Faced with the dismantling of its Iraqi-Syrian caliphate IS is likely to evolve into a terror-insurgent movement ever reliant on *inspiring* and

directing virtual attacks. The role of the *dark net* and encrypted technology like *Telegram, WhatsApp and Surespot* are guarantors that IS' *virtual network* is likely to survive the caliphate's destruction. The overall threat to the West, moreover, may not diminish.

IS' PROPAGANDA AND EXTERNAL OPERATIONS NETWORK

No discussion of IS' 2014–2017 attacks in the West can proceed without addressing Abu Muhammad al-Adnani's role. Prior to his August 2016 killing in an American airstrike Adnani was in the forefront of directing IS terrorism against the West. He was a brilliant polemicist rallying supporters to kill Westerners. Starting in September 2014 his calls for attacks by any means possible have been heeded by sympathizers in America, France, Belgium, Australia, Spain, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Canada, Denmark and Australia. Not simply confined to a propaganda role Adnani was also a participant in the development of IS's external operations. Reportedly he authorized the assault team that carried out the November 13, 2015, attacks in Paris. His legacy is profound and deadly.

Born in Syria Adnani was imprisoned by the Assad regime for his jihadist activities. He was one of the early members of AQI joining the organization soon after the 2003 US invasion. He swore fidelity [*bay'ah*] to AQI's emir Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Binali informs us that Adnani played a pivotal role in the guidance of AQI's training camps. After being imprisoned by US authorities at Camp Bucca, Adnani was released by Iraqi officials after the US departure. His service to AQI led to senior positions in its ISI successor that in 2006 prematurely declared an emirate. Adnani swore loyalty to Zarqawi's successors including Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi who in 2010 assumed leadership of the network. ISI's revitalized network capitalized on the power vacuum left by the US departure and the sectarian antagonisms percolating in the region.[52]

Adnani emerged as ISI's second in command and he played a pivotal role in the formation of its Syrian network. He along with Abu Muhammad al-Golani assisted in the creation of JN that eventually broke away from IS and later AQ to form *Jabhat Fatah al-Sham* [Levant Conquest Front].[53] His importance as a propagandist is incontrovertible for his prolific audio

addresses pillory IS' many opponents that include "Zionist-Crusaders," Kurdish "apostates," the Shia, Alawites and AQ. He presents a didactic universe where IS aligned Sunnis confront a despotic world in which their struggle is divinely ordained to triumph. Significantly it is Adnani that declares the formation of the caliphate in June of 2014.

Adnani's audio addresses propound key IS themes that the Muslim world is in a state of discord [*fitna*] and ignorance [*jahiliyyah*] that can only be overcome through fortification of medieval Islamic values. This crisis he contends is exacerbated by a *Zionist-Crusader* alliance with Iran that aims to annihilate righteous Sunnis who will join with IS in a final prophetic apocalyptic war. He depicts IS aligned Sunnis as facing a vast diabolical conspiracy.

Adnani's voice was a rallying cry for action that attracting vast numbers of foreign fighters. Europeans play a pivotal role in IS external operations to attack the West. French and Belgian born fighters, for example, were in the vanguard of IS's assault in Europe. IS' hatred of the West is driven by ideological and situational factors. First, the caliphate's apocalyptic ideology mandates confrontation with a *demonic* West. Second, it needs to retaliate against the Western assisted military campaign against the caliphate to rally its supporters. Third, it directly appeals to European and North American Muslims that religious imperatives demand they side with the caliphate by joining IS military forces or by killing Westerners in their own lands. Fourth, its targeting of European populations is designed to drive fissures in the international coalition to weaken Western resolve to maintain military action against the caliphate. Fifth, the IS's ideology ties the Western military campaign to Iranian Shia interests effectively fusing the *far* and *sectarian* enemies.

IS' *far enemy* strategy is a vital component in its *total war* doctrine designed to insure that the caliphate *remains* and *expands*. Adnani's call for terrorism against the West is expressed in speeches and IS publications. His four major addresses between September 2014 and May 2016 published across *Al Hayat Media Enterprises* call for Muslims to launch attacks against Westerners. Complementing his oratorical skills was his position within the IS s media and terror operations. Adnani reportedly oversaw production values and content for IS' execution videos of enemy soldiers, homosexuals, western hostages, sorcerers, adulterers and Christians. The

theatrical punishments (burials, drowning, immolations, beheadings, fire squad, casting people off of tall buildings) graphically shown were designed to inspire fear and generate support from young jihadists attracted to IS' video game violence.

Featured in many videos are European rap artists whose *hip hop* messages are designed to recruit Western fighters. In his profile of thirty thousand Syrian foreign fighters Richard Barrett documents that vast majority of these fighters are young males who dominate in the ranks of the IS soldiers.[54] Among the five thousand European fighters French, Belgian and British nationals are prominently displayed in IS' videos including the late British executioner Mohammad Emwazi nicknamed *Jihadi John* and Abdelhamid Abaaoud the organizer of the November 2015 Paris attacks who would later die in a police raid.[55]

Adnani, moreover, supervised IS external terror operations across the world. Based on testimony by a German IS defector Adnani screened European candidates trained in the caliphate's camps.[56] French and Belgian fighters were especially enthusiastic about committing attacks against their home countries. The Brussels suburb of Molenbeek has been a den for IS recruitment and terror planning.

Beyond directing teams to kill Westerners, Adnani hoped to inspire *lone wolf* and *homegrown* terrorists. Adani's incendiary style can be seen in the passage below that eerily foreshadows attacks by IS sympathizers. His September 2014 address urges IS follower to:

> If you kill a disbelieving American or European-especially the spiteful and filthy French-or an Australian, or a Canadian, or any other disbelievers from the disbelievers waging war, including the citizens of the countries they entered into a coalition against the IS, then rely on Allah, and kill him in any manner or way however it may be. Smash his head with a rock, or slaughter him with a knife, or run over him with your car.[57]

Since Adnani's call over two dozen plots or attacks have been committed in the West by IS sympathizers. Heeding his entreaty Europeans and North Americans have been stabbed, bombed, axed, shot, beheaded, and in the most lethal *lone wolf* attack a IS sympathizer in Nice ran over eighty-six

Bastille Day spectators with a tanker truck. Significantly the vast majority of those killed or wounded have been civilians. Trains, parade grounds, concerts, restaurants, shops, night clubs have been attacked. Many of the attackers swore fidelity to IS before they committed their atrocities.

The IS's call for violent action in the West has had a powerful effect on radicalizing young Muslims. A 2017 study reports thirty-four plots in seven Western countries involved teenagers and pre-teens who executed or contemplated knife or explosives attacks. Some 50 percent of these young people had contact with IS operatives across social media forums. One plot involved a twelve year old boy who failed to ignite an explosive device at a Christmas market in Germany. Had it not been for a badly designed improvised bomb the casualties could have been considerable. The scale of the terror danger underscores the existence of vast network that has a great deal of autonomy to plan, execute, finance, *inspire* and *virtually direct* terror attacks.

THE CALIPHATE'S EXTERNAL OPERATIONS BRANCH

While Adnani oversaw external terror operations the detailed organization, financing and planning of IS terror campaign was performed by IS *Amniyat* internal security branch. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross argues that Amn al-Kharaj organized the caliphate's external operations.[58] The *Amniyat* has a hierarchical chain of command. Overall regional operations are overseen by militants born or familiar with the counties that are planning to attack.

Though centralized IS's bureaucracy is sufficiently nimble giving freedom to its regional planners. The caliphate's European theatre of operations is dominated by French born or speaking militants with Abu Sulayman al-Faransi and Salim Benghalem selecting, training, and dispatching attack teams. IS's terror campaign involves many French and Belgium operatives eager to attack their native homelands. Seven of the nine terrorists that hit Paris on November 13, 2015, were French. Faransi and Benghalem worked with French ideologue Fabien Clain and Belgian team organizer Abdelhamid Abaaoud in selecting fighters.[59] Though some plots were disrupted, others succeeded spectacularly. The instruction these teams received increased the lethality of IS' terror campaign with the Paris 2015 and 2016 Brussels attacks killing 160 people.

French and Belgian direction of these operations is unsurprising for jihadi activism is deeply rooted in these countries. Some observers argue that the current wave of jihadi terrorism in France is attributable to Paris' *Nineteenth District Network*.[60] The group's organizer Boukaker al-Hakim sent dozens of fighters to Iraq to wage jihad against the American after their overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime. Iraqi combat veterans like Mohammad al-Ayouni and Salim Benghalem are implicated in the current wave of jihadi violence in France and Belgium.

Jean-Pierre Filiu argues that Hakim set up a IS' network in Tunisia that acts synergistically with terror cells in France.[61] He links the Tunis' *Bardo Museum* attack and the Suisse beach resort assault to low level attacks in France. IS' Belgian network has played a considerable role in the development of IS European terror operations.

Belgium has the highest per capita number of foreign fighters traveling to Syria of any Western European country. Of the 451 estimated fighters a majority are second and third generation immigrants who were raised in isolated impoverished neighborhoods.[62] Many are in their twenties with criminal backgrounds. Alienated by Western culture and embittered by their criminal past these young people were looking for an alternative communal identity in their quest for redemption. Subsections of Belgium's immigrant population have proven vulnerable to jihadist radicalization.

There are many extremist organizations in Belgium. Researchers attribute the foreign fighter flow to Syria to three networks. *Shariah4Belgium*, *Resto Tawid* and the *Zerkani Network*, for example, recruited over 170 Belgian fighters some of whom have served in IS' external operations branch.[63] They include Abdelhamid Abaaoud who oversaw the Paris November 13, 2015, attacks. The *Zerkani Network* has been the focus of repeated anti-terror operations and prosecutions.

Based in Molenbeek Moroccan preacher Khalid *Zerkani's Network* is committed to the promotion of Islamist and jihadi causes.[64] Unemployment and criminal activity in this immigrant dominated suburb has been a conduit for extremist indoctrination of religiously illiterate young men. Often financed by clandestine activity the network generated funds to send fighters to Syria. Zerkani's network has been implicated with Paris attackers

Abdelhamid Abaaoudd and Chakib Akrouh and Brussels terrorist Najim Laachraoui.

The *Zerkani Network* is part of Europe's infrastructure of jihadi *entrepreneurs* involved in the religious training of impressionable young men with violent criminal pasts. Led by charismatic preachers like Britain's Ahmed Choudary, France's Fabien Clain and Germany's Abu Wala these organizations have groomed hundreds of European jihadists Choudary's significance is especially profound for *Sharia4Belgium* is an offshoot of his organizational blueprint to spread jihadi activism across Europe.[65]

The Paris attackers stored weapons caches and explosives at multiple locations. Contributing to the success of IS Paris assault was Belgium's poorly financed, understaffed and fragmented police and intelligence agencies. Strewn across federal, provincial and local levels often speaking different languages police and intelligence units guarded their autonomy religiously impairing the flow and coordination of information on terror suspects.[66]

Poor relations between Belgian police and immigrant communities, moreover, impeded the development of informants. The sheer size of Belgium's extremist community and its foreign fighters has overwhelmed security services. Poorly integrated into European wider intelligence network Belgian communication with French intelligence agencies was poor. These conditions facilitated the development of IS terror cells.

CONCEPTUALIZING IS OPERATIONS

The IS's European attack network presents severe challenges to security agencies. Though these assault types overlap the caliphate's operations have been linked *to directed, virtual, inspired,* and *lone wolf* attacks (See Table 7.1 on the next page). Each attack form has strengths and weaknesses and their lethality varies unpredictable.[67] The attack typology (above) is discussed sequentially beginning with *directed* operations and ending with IS affiliated *lone wolf* terrorism.

Table 7.1 Types and Examples of Islamic State Attacks in the West

Directed Attacks by IS agents trained and dispatched from Syria	*Virtual Directed Attacks by IS Operatives who guide the caliphate's supporters through social media channels*	*Ideologically Inspired Attacks by IS Supporters*	*"Lone Wolf" Attacks by Islamic Extremists with multiple jihadist sympathies*
May 2014 Jewish Museum Attack in Brussels	Aborted May 2015 Garland, Texas Attack	July 2016 Nice Bastille Day Attack	December 2015 San Bernardino attack
Aborted August 2015 Thalys Train Attack	July 2016 Wurzburg Germany Train Attack	December 2016 Berlin Christmas Market Attack	June 2016 Orlando Pulse Nightclub Attack
November 2015 Paris Attacks	July 2016 Ansbach Germany Concert attacks on Outside Music Concert Attack	August 2017 Barcelona and Cambrils Attacks	
March 2016 Brussels Attacks			

DIRECTED ATTACKS BY TRAINED IS OPERATIVES

This attack type allows IS maximum control. The caliphate trains, finances and dispatched attack teams and guides their targeting. The Paris and Brussels attacks are exemplars of IS *directed* operations. The terrorists involved were trained in Syria and were dispatched to sow chaos in Europe transiting through Balkan refugee migrant routes with forged passports. IS' European terror network, however, did not mature until January 2015 when Belgian authorities disrupted an eleven man attack cell in the town of Verviers. IS' external security branch, moreover, accorded its tactical commander Abdelhamid Abaaoud freedom to develop its European operations.[68]

Recruited by the Zerkani network Abaaoud traveled to Syria in 2014 and eventually joined IS' contingent of Belgian and French fighters. He was selected by *Amniyat's* core trainer a Belgian national named "Abu Ahmad" (birth name Osama Atar) to be IS point man for its European operation.[69] Abaaound is connected to virtually every plot and attack that occurs in Europe from the May 2014 Jewish Museum attack to the March 2016 Brussels bombings. His associates include Mehdi Nemmouche (the Jewish Museum attack), Ayoub el Khazzani (the aborted Thalys train attack), the

Verviers attack cell, Reda Hame (apprehended by French police in August 2015 before he could commit a terror attack), Sid Ahmed Ghlam,(arrested by French police in April 2015 for planning to carry out an act of terrorism) and Salah Abdelslam (connected to the Paris and Brussels attack cells).[70]

IS began developing its European terror architecture before its caliphate proclamation. Abaaoud communicated with Mehdi Nemmouche who guarded Western prisoners in Syria. Nemmouche was notorious for his sadistic temperament and like many IS Belgian fighters spent time in Molenbeek. After a trip to Southeast Asia Nemmouche returned to Belgium and after communications with Abaaoud gunned down four people at the Jewish Museum. He was later apprehended by French police after he crossed the Belgian border in a passenger train.

The Jewish Museum attack began IS' terror campaign in Europe. By January 2015 it became clear that the caliphate was beginning to move beyond lone gunmen when Belgian police intercepted phone calls between the Verviers cell and Abaaoud. Fearing an impending attack Belgian security services stormed the cell's apartment killing two members of the network.

Law enforcement investigators discovered firearms, Belgian police uniforms and explosives. Based on the evidence police speculate that the eleven man cell may have planned an assault on police stations. Disrupting the Verviers network had profound ramifications. Abaaoud hoped to *remotely direct* the Verviers cell from Athens, Greece. Having his initial plans disrupted Abaaoud decided that he needed to travel to Europe and directly participate in IS' terror campaign.[71] Fearing further police disruption, Abbaaoud chose encrypted social media channels like *Telegram and WhatsApp* to communicate. His activity unleashed the Paris assaults.

Beginning in January 2015 France was rocked by jihadi attacks and plots. One IS militant Amedy Coulibaly killed four people at the *Hyper Cacher* kosher grocery store timing it with AQAP sympathizers Said and Cherif Kouachi attack on the Charlie Hebdo editorial offices. The day before Coulibaly shot and killed a French policewoman. Coulibaly swore fidelity to IS organization whose publication *Dabiq* venerates his *martyrdom* and interviews his spouse who had traveled to Syria before the attack.[72]

Significantly the magazine's issue also features an interview with Abaaoud perhaps presaging the November Paris attacks.[73]

Though Abaaoud cannot be connected to the kosher grocery store attack, he is linked to aborted attacks in April and August 2015. Under Abaaoud's direction twenty-four year old Algerian jihadist Sid Ahmed Ghlam was guided to attack Parisian churches. Though he had limited training in Syria, he accidently shot himself forcing him to contact medical authorities. His wounds aroused police suspicion. They found automatic assault weapons in his car and a search of his apartment revealed IS related material on his computer.

Abaaoud directed another IS fighter Ayoub el Khazzani to commit mass murder on a passenger train. Phone logs indicate extensive communication between Khazzani and Abaaoud.[74] Selecting a passenger train traveling from Amsterdam to Paris in August 2015 armed with a pistol and AK 47, Khazzani wanted to kill passengers. Though he shot one person he was subdued by three passengers when his automatic weapon malfunctioned. The disrupted church and passenger train attacks distracted law enforcement investigators enough to set up the caliphate's most spectacular European operation.

Planning for the November 13, 2015, attacks was done in Belgium from multiple locations.[75] Salah Abdelsalen played a crucial logistical role. It was Abdelsalem that picked up members of the assault teams who arrived to Europe on fake Syrian refugees. Most entered Europe via Greece and Turkey with Abdelsalem meeting assault team members in Hungary and Austria transporting them to Belgium. He also rented flats for the team in Paris and Belgium and the cars that ferreted most of the terrorists from Brussels to Paris. Though he did not participate in either the Paris or Brussels attacks, Abdelsalem is indelibly linked to both events.

His role in establishing the logistical infrastructure for the November 13 assault is not surprising. Abdelsalem was a boyhood friend of Abaaoud and perhaps his most trusted confidant. By August 2015 the assault team was firmly established in Europe and the existence of safe houses rented under multiple identities insured that the network would not be vulnerable to police interception. Learning from the Verviers debacle communication between cell members relied on encrypted technology.

Brussels attacker Najim Laachraoui assisted the fabrication of *TATP*-laden (triacetone triperoxide) suicide belts. By early November team members had moved to Paris flats and the decision to mount a devastating attack was a certainty.[76] While Abaaoud oversaw the teams he was acting under the authority of Belgian "Abu Ahmad" who supervised the operation from Syria. Three teams of operators were formed, each with a specific target. Abaaoud witnessed the carnage outside of the Bataclan Concert Hall and canbe seen at the Paris Metro on CCTV footage during and after the attack. Table 7.2 on the next page lists the attack's team members and targets.

Table 7.2 The November 13, 2015 Paris Attacks

Target	*Bataclan Concert Hall*	*Stade de France*	*Bars and Restaurants*
Attackers	Ismael Mostefai Sammy Amour Foued Mohammed Agged	Bilal Hadafi Two other terrorists suspected of being Iraqis using fake aliases still to be identified	Brahim Abdelsalem Chakib Akrouh

The most lethal attack was at the Bataclan where the American band *The Eagles* was playing. Having killed a security guard three terrorists entered the hall and began firing their automatic weapons at the crowd. When the police arrived they took hostages whom they killed when igniting their suicide vests. Some eighty concert goers were killed and hundreds more were wounded. The *Stade de France* attack could have been the most mortifying of the attacks with devastating political consequences. The stadium was packed with thousands of spectators with President Francois Holland watching a soccer match. Fortunately security was vigilant and their body search requirement dissuaded the three IS militants from entering the stadium.

Prevented from attacking inside the premises team members were perplexed and frantically telephoned their supervisors. Abaaoud and Ahmad were contacted by the frustrated team and finally they decided to ignite their suicide belts killing only one passerby.[77] A third team of two assassins moved across central Paris attacking bars and restaurants killing some fifty people before immolating themselves.

Abaaoud wanted to follow-up the November 13th attacks with an assault on the Parisian commercial district *La Defense*. He would die along two others including his cousin in a police shootout when their *Saint-Denis* hideout was discovered. Abaaoud's female cousin had spoken to a friend about the attacks who informed police. Following Abaaoud's cousin there were able to discover Abaaoud's whereabouts. Resisting a commando raid the three suspects were killed over a four hour shootout.

Though we cannot be absolutely certain investigators suspect that Salah Abdelsalem was to join his brother Brahim on the mobile unit targeting restaurants but lost his nerve. Having ditched his suicide explosive vest he telephoned two Brussels friends who picked him passing ironically a number of police checkpoints. He moved to multiple locations including a Moleenbek safe house. Amazingly he was fugitive for four months. His arrest in mid-March 2016 may have hastened the Brussels attacks.

Criticized by French law enforcement officials for failing to disrupt the November 13th network Belgian security and police were frantic to abort future attacks. Working to unearth the remaining parts of the Paris attack network they discovered safe houses and arms caches. Closing in on Abdelsalem police were involved in a firefight with IS terrorists guarding a safe house killing one extremist. Information obtained at the safe house allowed police to capture and arrest Abdelsalem. Given his knowledge of their network the IS cell knew that immediate action was necessary.

Like the Paris attackers those who assaulted the Zeventum airport and Molenbeek metro on March 22, 2016 were trained IS fighters. The role Ibrahim and Khalid Barkaoui play in the Brussels attacks is especially celebrated in IS publications.[78] The Barkaoui brothers, Najim Laachaouri and Mohammad Abrini carried out near simultaneous attacks.

Transporting suitcase bombs and automatic weapons by taxi to the airport Ibrahim Barkaoui, Najim Laachroui and Mohammad Abrini hoped for a catastrophic attack. Had not one of the bombs not malfunctioned they may have realized their goal. When two of the bombs exploded over a dozen people were killed and hundreds were wounded. Having failed to ignite the bomb Abrini fled the attack site and was later arrested.

The attack on the subway was even more lethal. Khalid Barkaoui exploded his suicide vest onboard a subway car killing some eighteen

people. By the end of the day thirty-two people were killed in Belgium's worst terrorist attack.

The Paris and Brussels attacks may be the crest of IS's campaign utilizing trained fighters. Since the March 22, 2016 attack we have not witnessed one assault featuring a foreign fighter sent to Europe by the *Amniyat* security branch. French police in March 2016 arrested IS foot soldier Reda Kriket after discovering arms and explosives in his flat. Whether IS' remaining network is either destroyed or intentionally dormant is difficult to assess. What we can say with some confidence is IS's use of *virtual guidance* to attack Western homelands has not been idle.

DIRECTED VIRTUAL ATTACKS BY IS SYMPATHIZERS

This type of *remote control* terrorism is testimony to IS' innovative external operations. *Virtual direction* uses social media channels to recruit, radicalize and guide supporter to kill Westerners. This can involve months of communications designed to bolster the potential assassin's determination. Targets can be discussed and methods of execution assessed between *virtual planners* and sympathizers. *Virtual direction* can reference IS manuals on how to construct explosive devices or what weapons to use in an attack. One issue of IS' English language *Rumiyah* gives tactical advice on knife attacks.[79]

Encrypted technology like *Telegram and WhatsApp* guarantee secure private communication between *virtual planners* and sympathizers. It is an ideal forum to evade security services surveillance for it secures end to end messages. Within Europe IS can provide tactical assistance from the provision of funds and arms to sympathizers under *virtual direction*.

IS has a network of *virtual planners* divided into regional theatres. IS *virtual planning* operations in Europe has been dominated by Frenchman Rachid Kassim.[80] From his Syrian redoubt Kassim is linked to plots and attacks across France and Germany often involving alienated young people and psychologically troubled immigrants. His counseling has no doubt played a role in precipitating some violent acts. He was connected to two July 2016 attacks in Germany one by an Afghan immigrant who using a hatchet wounded four South Korean tourists on a passenger train and the other by a Syrian refugee who wounded fifteen people when he ignited a

suicide explosive vest outside of an Ansbach music concert. Prior to their violent acts the perpetrators posted loyalty pledges across the IS's *Amaq News Agency.*

Prior to his death in a US airstrike, Kassim was *virtually directing* attacks by French militants. France's extremist community numbers in the thousands and is a receptive canvass for violent agitation. Young people in their teens and twenties have been targeted. Kassim communicated with one sympathizer that beheaded a police captain and his companion in their Parisian apartment in June 2016 and in the following month convinced two militants to behead an elderly French priest in a small rural church. He was also linked to an aborted plot in September *2016* by three female jihadists who under his direction aspired to attack a train station. The scheme was disrupted when police found an illegally parked car close to *Notre Dame* square containing the gas canisters to be used in the operation.

Robin Simcox reports 50 percent of the thirty-four IS-linked plots in Western countries involving teens were *virtually directed*.[81] Most of these attack schemes involved knives. With some 2,000 French teens radicalized the persistence of jihadi violence is likely.[82]

The caliphate prioritizes striking the United States by *virtual direction*. Strategically the use of *virtual planning* to inspire supporters into taking violent action is dictated by the lack of a direct network. The United States does not have a large radicalized Muslim Diaspora population. With only two hundred and fifty US fighters traveling to Syria America's extremist community is small.[83] This does not mean, however, that the US homeland is secure.

Since 2014 over a hundred people have been charged with IS related terrorism offenses.[84] Some 900 criminal investigations have been opened. Seventy people have been arrested for IS linked terror activity. Most of the criminal cases deal with IS recruitment, financial support and travel to Syria. Some, however, involved plots to kill Americans. Analysts point to the failed Garland, Texas *Curtis Cutwell* Center attack as the organization's opening salvo to kill Americans. One of its *virtual* planners British born Junaid Hussein communicated with Elton Simpson to attack the Center that was exhibiting Prophet Muhammad cartoons.[85] Equipped with automatic

weapons Simpson and his partner were gunned down by a police guard before they could enter the complex.

Investigators point to Hussain's communications with Jostan Nolan Sullivan who was planning shootings in Virginia and North Carolina, Usaamah Rahil who sought to stab police in Boston, and Munir Abdulkader who aspired to behead a US service man.[86] Another IS virtual planner Abu Issa al-Amriki communicated with Emmanuel Lutman to launch a New Year's Eve attack and he sought to recruit Aaron Travis Daniels to travel to the caliphate as one of its *soldiers*.

Despite their lack of success in guiding IS' American sympathizers, US national security planners take its virtual direction campaign seriously. Since 2015 American security forces have prioritized killing IS' coterie of *virtual planners* eradicating Hussain and al-Amriki. Though the West may be able to kill RachId Kassim and Junaid Hussain it is difficult to disrupt the inflammatory effect of IS' propaganda.

An April 2017 British parliamentary investigation of the death of IS UK militant Reyaad Khan in Raqqa, Syria highlights the dangers of the caliphate's remote-controlled operations.[87] Khan was killed in an August 2015 British drone strike targeting IS external operations network. The controversy generated by an overseas assassination of a British national prompted the Westminster investigation that indicated that Khan was actively recruiting British citizens to attack their homeland.

Khan had been featured in a number of IS videos urging British nationals to emigrate to the caliphate. The committee report indicates that he was providing targeting and weapons assistance to UK extremists across social media forums and that multiple plots had been disrupted. It, furthermore, concluded that Khan's activities constituted an *imminent danger* justifying his assassination.[88] While Western security planners can disrupt external networks through targeted killing operations, stopping militants inspired by IS' ideological appeals may be even more problematic.

INSPIRED ATTACKS BY IS SUPPORTERS

The IS's commitment to the radicalization of Western Muslims is represented in its social messaging. Since its June 2014 caliphate proclamation, IS has erected a vast media empire designed to promote its

ideology in the West. It main line media enterprises expressed in multiple languages to encourage Muslims emigration to the lands of the caliphate. Barring this IS' Al Hayat's English language *Dabiq*, its successor *Rumiyah* and its French publication *Dar al-Islam* prioritize Western Muslims killing *apostates* in their native lands. Its *Amaq News Agency* enthusiastically publicizes the pledges of support for Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi by Western Muslims who are about to commit terrorism.

The caliphate's propaganda justifies its anti-Western violence through two arguments. First, it asserts that Western Muslims inhabit a *grey zone* that prevents them from practicing a correct form of Islam.[89] Secular democratic society denies Muslims their right to *divinely inspired* Sharia governance forcing them to abide Western legal processes and customs that compromise their religious convictions. Western immorality, alcohol, homosexuality, and feminism is pilloried by IS propagandists who assert Muslim exposure to such *filth* has a corrupting influence. Western forms of "Islam" thus create a bastardized hybrid religion that abnegates the core foundation of Muslim belief. Second, IS propagandists argue the *Crusader West* is at war with Islam through it military operations against the caliphate obligating retaliatory *defensive jihad.*

IS' ideologues argue that Western Muslims live in a *grey zone* in countries at war with their faith. This creates an identity crisis that must be overcome by emigrating to the caliphate or killing Westerners in their native lands. Muslims who fail to defend their caliphate renounce their faith. The IS's call for Muslim minorities in the West to kill *apostates* by any means has intensified with IS' military reversals. Europe and North America extremists have heeded the caliphate's calling and have used trucks to kill large numbers of people.

Using cargo trucks as death machines is another IS innovation. They have been employed in battles waged against enemies and as terrorist instruments to maximize civilian casualties. Two IS linked terror attacks in Europe have been especially destructive.

The Nice and Berlin attacks have striking similarities beyond the use of trucks as assault weapons. Both attackers were Tunisian nationals living an alienated life in the West. Nice attacker thirty-one year old Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhiel worked for a trucking company. His troubled life

included alcoholism, drug abuse, spousal abuse and promiscuity. Twenty-six year old Amis Amri who carried out the Berlin attack had spent five years in an Italian prison for assault and theft. Neither Lahouaiej-Bouhiel nor Amri were religious. They were radicalized later in life and may have viewed IS affiliation as an act of spiritual redemption.

Both were exposed to IS propaganda and were linked to pro-IS jihadist preachers. Though Amri was radicalized in Italian prisons German Iraqi preacher Abu Wala intensified his extremism. Based in the North-Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony regions Wala disseminated pro-IS literature and preyed upon young psychologically troubled men. French officials have linked Lahouaiej-Bouhiel to IS literature and sympathizers. He reportedly was fascinated by IS execution videos.[90] Prior to the attack he exhibited signs of religious devotion and had grown a beard.

Lahouaiej-Bouhiel targeted a large Bastille Day crowd watching fireworks. Lightly guarded by French police checkpoints and with no concrete barriers denying entry to a vehicle the locale was attractive attack site. The Tunisian jihadist had scouted the area before the attack and planned the operation. With its nationalistic secular character an attack on Bastille Day was rife with symbolism.

Breaking through a police checkpoint and traveling at high speed Lahouaiej-Bouhiel smashed his 19 ton cargo truck through hundreds of people celebrating on the *Promenade des Anglais*. He in a zigzag pattern mowed down escaping Bastille Day participants. He killed 86 people and wounded hundreds of others before police killed him. Inside the cabin investigators found automatic weapons and a pistol speculating that Lahouaiej-Bouhiel sought to continue his rampage once he vacated his vehicle. His *martyrdom* inspired imitators.

Berlin attacker Anis Amri’s case exemplifies the deficiencies of combating Islamist extremis in Europe. He came to Germany after Italian authorities had released him hoping for political asylum. With a criminal history and jihadi sympathies Amri’s petition was rejected and he was awaiting deportation at the time he committed mass murder. Though German officials had detained Amri, he was released by a court order. Deportation was delayed until German authorities received verification of his Tunisian citizenship for German law forbids deportation without

sufficient identity documentation. Amri's denial of asylum rights may have contributed to his decision to commit mass murder.

At a rest stop for truckers Amri shot and killed a Polish truck driver. Commandeering his cargo truck Amri drove uneasily around Berlin searching for a target. He chose a Christmas market where hundreds of people congregated plowing through a small barricade into the crowd. Had it not been for the truck's automatic breaking system the carnage would be worse. After his rampage fourteen people died and dozens were wounded.

Amri evaded European authorities for days. After abandoning his truck *CCTV* footage captures him entering an Islamic Center infamous for extremist sympathies. He took a train to the Netherlands and then eventually a rail journey across France to Turin, Italy. Having stayed many years in Italy Amri could have had friends in Turin willing to provide a safe house. Questioned by Italian police outside the Turin station Amri died in a shootout with authorities. The Tunisian jihadist's ability to circumvent a police manhunt and travel across European countries underscores the pitfalls of the Continent's Schengen *free movement* agreement.

Amri posted a pledge of *bay'ah* to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi aired on *Telegram* by the caliphate's *Amaq News Agency* after his Christmas market attack.[91] IS propagandists hail Amri and Lahouaiej-Bouhiel as their *soldiers*. The caliphate was so impressed by the Nice Attack that it generated an animated simulation of Lahouaiej-Bouhiel driving through a crowd of *apostates* justifying his *martyrdom operation* as retaliation for *Crusader France's* aggression against the caliphate.

Equally palpable is the IS's hostility toward Spain.

Reflecting the country's past Islamic heritage and its Andalusian caliphate IS media operations have repeatedly called for the *reconquest* of Al Andaluz. The Madrid train attacks of March 2004 that killed 191 people still stands as the single most lethal Islamist terror attack in European history. As Fernando Reinares has convincingly pointed out, Spain has remained in the crosshairs of AQ terrorists even after its Iraq disengagement.[92]

The country features many jihadi networks concentrated around Barcelona, Madrid and its North African possessions Ceuta and Melilla.

Spain's foreign fighters in Syria mostly come from its Maghreb territories.[93] Many have entered the ranks of the IS.

Catalonia, furthermore, is a major hub for jihadist networks who have recruited its members from North African Diaspora communities. Given the depth of the jihadi/extremist presence in the region another attack in Spain was inevitable. Its fertile Islamist micro culture contributed to two August 2017 terror attacks that killed sixteen people. The lethality of the assault could have been tripled had the terrorists original plans been implemented. Their original design involved bombing key tourist sites in Barcelona. An unintended explosion at a safe house in Alcanar killed two members of the group (including its ring leader imam Abdelbaki Es-Satti). The event altered the terror cell's plans.

Fearing that police would question one of the cell's members wounded in the Alcanar explosion, the jihadists acted quickly. They mounted a van and knife attacks in Barcelona and in the coastal town of Cambrils over two days. Driving a van into Barcelona's crowded *Las Ramblas* boulevard Younes Abouyaaquob killed 13 pedestrians. Ditching the van and escaping through a crowded market near the square, he hijacked a car killing its driver. He would remain at large for two days.

Hoping to capitalize on the shock of the Barcelona assault a second team of five jihadists launched a late night van and knife attack in Cambrils killing a German tourist, wounding one policeman and injuring a few pedestrians. During the assault police shot all of the militants dead after their van flipped over. Barcelona attacker Younes Abouyaaqoub was later killed by police in a mountainous vineyard many kilometers from the city. Shortly after the *Las Ramblas* attack IS claimed responsibility across a *Telegram* channel.

The Barcelona and Cambrils attacks were among the most sophisticated in Europe since IS' directed operations in Paris and Brussels. Its ten man cell amassed explosives capable of fabricating over a dozen bombs. Based on testimony by one captured suspect, the team was targeting the city's famous cathedral *La Sagrada Familia*. The terror conspiracy size and complexity makes it distinct from most IS inspired attacks that feature one or two attackers.

The attack, however, involved recruitment and radicalization processes seen elsewhere. The impact that jihadi preachers have on impressionable alienated young men cannot be over emphasized. Eager for spiritual redemption young Muslim immigrants can be easily seduced by IS linked religious teachers. The cells ringleader was a Ripoll based imam Abdelbaki Es-Satti for six months indoctrinated the network's Moroccan born younger members. Their religious radicalization was abrupt and some may have viewed their jihadi commitment as a pathway to personal redemption. The Barcelona/Cambrils terrorists lived largely secular often hedonistic lives prior to their extremist conversion. Family members of the terrorists killed or captured have expressed surprise at their son's jihadi inclinations.

Prior to his death at the Alcanar safe house Es-Satti had professed his IS affiliation in a document left at the residence. His travels to Vilvoorde Belgium and Morocco may be linked to contacts with IS's network.[94] A year before the Barcelona and Cambrils attacks Belgian authorities warned Catalan officials that Es-Satti was involved in jihadist recruitments efforts in Vilvoorde that along with Moleenbeck had become IS hubs. Significantly Spain's regional authorities failed to follow up with an investigation.

Moroccans, moreover, dominate Spain's jihadi subculture.[95] Alarmingly Morocco has one of the highest foreign fighter populations serving in IS ranks in Syria raising a specter of future terror attacks across the Mediterranean. Rabat and Madrid are working hard to monitor the return of foreign fighters.

The failure of Spanish security services to disrupt the Barcelona and Cambrils attacks reflects poor intelligence coordination between global, national and regional authorities. Catalonia's controversial bid to secede from the country may have exacerbated this problem.

Warned by Madrid that *Las Ramblas'* pedestrian area was vulnerable to truck and van attacks, Spanish authorities advised that Catalan authorities to erect vehicle barriers. The recommendation was rejected. Advised by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) a few weeks before the attack that the famous boulevard was being targeted by IS network, Spanish authorities found the claim not credible.

Investigators are trying to determine the level of IS involvement in these attacks. There are many unanswered questions. The design of the bombs

constructed comports with the IS's explosives manuals as does the use of vehicular and knife assaults. One key determinant of the caliphate's external operations role will be the ability of security services to decipher the cell's level of communication with IS' larger network. Given the network's encryption of its communication, they may not be able to ascertain these connections. Given the persistence of IS external operations network and radicalized subpopulations Europe is likely to face a persistent terror threat for decades.

The IS in the United States, however, has less of a support base. There are no American equivalents to *Sharia4Belgium*. the *Abu Wala* and *Zerkani* networks. American Muslims rarely live in cloistered unassimilated neighborhoods and most do not espouse radical causes. Though the caliphate has published *kill lists* of American police and military personnel, few heed the IS's call. Where the caliphate has radicalized American supporters they usually involve attacks by mentally troubled immigrants. Most of these assaults involved the use of knives with college campuses or shopping malls targeted. Though dozens have been wounded there have been no fatalities. This does not mean that the caliphate cannot goad sympathizers with broad jihadi allegiances into committing mass murder. It has done this successfully.

LONE WOLFS WITH MULTIPLE JIHADI SYMPATHIES

Sam Mullins reports that 70 percent of IS linked terrorist acts in the West are conducted by *lone actors*.[96] Often the attacker's abrupt radicalization prompts spontaneous violence making the attack unpreventable. More often than not the perpetrator has a history of mental illness. Though widely maligned the concept continues to be accurate for many IS sympathizers that have little direct connection to the caliphate's virtual or organizational network. Though they may have been inspired by the caliphate's propaganda, *lone wolves* autonomously plan and execute their own attacks.[97] Such seems to be the case with attacks committed in the San Bernardino, Orlando and New York.

American extremists have overlapping jihadist allegiances easily transferable between organizations.[98] Often ignorant of the ideological divisions between AQ and the IS, American extremists have cross

hybridized jihadi sympathies. Affiliation with the IS may be opportunistic and can revert back to AQ. Given the absence of an Islamist infrastructure on-line radicalization is a stimulant for IS linked violence in America. This was the case in the San Bernardino and Orlando attacks.

On December 2, 2015, US born Syed Rizwan Farook and his immigrant wife Tashfeen Malik killed 14 people and injured 22 others at an employee training event hosted by the *Inland Regional Center i*n San Bernardino. Farook was an inspector for the Country Department of Public Health and was attending the event. He left the meeting abruptly and returned with his wife some forty minutes later. Armed with assault rifles they opened fire on those present in the banquet hall shooting over a hundred rounds. During the attack Malik expressed her support for IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi on her *Facebook* page. Having killed over a dozen people Farook and Malik left the center. They drove their sports utility vehicle (SUV) for over four hours around the San Bernardino until spotted by police. After being chased by law enforcement personnel on a roadway the couple stood their ground and were killed in a firefight.

Malik's participation in the attack is unusual. Rarely do spouses accompany their husbands on *martyrdom* missions. Her presence prompted speculation that she was a catalyst for Farook's radicalization. Though of Pakistani origin she lived much of her life in Saudi Arabia and met Farook via an on-line religious dating network. FBI Investigators highlight that the couple were radicalized over a number of years and their computer contained ample amounts of on-line extremist literature. Farook was infatuated with Anwar al-Awlaki writings and was familiar with AQAP bomb making instructions.

With his friend and convert Enrique Martinez Farook conspired in 2012 to commit a terrorist act. Fearing FBI detection they abandoned their plans. Martinez purchased the rifles used in the San Bernardino attack and he was charged with criminal conspiracy to *provide material support for terrorism.* Police investigators found on a conference center table Farook's backpack full of pipe bombs based on AQAP blueprints and when they searched the couple's garage they discovered caches of ammunition and explosive material. Farook and Malik were planning a terror act for years and why they chose to kill scores of people attending the training event is unclear. We do know that Malik objected to her husband being forced to participate

in a Christmas party following the training session. That may have been the impetus for the massacre.

What is clear is that the couple expressed multiple jihadi loyalties with Anwar al-Awlaki writings especially influential. The caliphate's adoption of Awlaki call for attacks by Western Muslims in their native lands may have been a trigger for the couple's transference of allegiance to the IS.[99] American jihadists have diffuse ideological convictions navigating across AQ, the Taliban and the IS. American born Omar Mateen who on June 12, 2016 killed forty-nine people at the *Pulse* Nightclub had a similar incapacity to differentiate between extremist groups.

Born in New York Mateen grew up in Florida a troubled young man in an Afghan immigrant family. He exhibited few signs of religious devotion and he had a rudimentary understanding of the Islamic faith. Mateen's aspirations for a law enforcement career were dashed when his police academy application was rejected. He settled for private security work moving uneasily between jobs. Equally unsettled was Mateen's personal life and a failed first marriage. His ex-wife accused him of spousal abuse and mental instability.

Unlike Farouk and Malik Mateen's jihadist sympathies were subject to a FBI inquiry. He was the target of two department investigations between 2013–2014 centering on allegations from a former employer that he exhibited religiously motivated violent behavior and an inquiry based on his association with an Iraqi-American suicide bomber who died during an *Al-Nusra martyrdom* operation. Mateen was briefly on the terrorist *No Fly List*. Having failed to establish a connection to a foreign terrorist organization the FBI in 2015 ended its investigation.

Mateen's motivation for attacking a nightclub that catered to a gay clientele prompted allegations that he was a *homophobic gay* incapable of reconciling his homosexuality with his jihadi sympathies. The *Department of Justice* investigation after the massacre found no evidence of Mateen's homosexuality. His second wife Noor Salmon accompanied him as he scouted out the nightclub as a potential target. She also went with him to the gun shop where he legally purchased he weapons. The Justice Department found enough evidence of complicity that it charged her with *aiding* and

abetting Mateen's terrorist act. At her subsequent trial she was found not guilty.

After having stormed into the club firing an automatic rifle and pistol, Mateen took hostages into the ladies restroom. In his phone conversations with police he expressed solidarity with IS and AQ's *Nusra Front* calling the attack retaliation for the US bombing campaign against the caliphate. Like San Bernardino's Malik Mateen swore *bay'ah* to IS emir Baghdadi during his *martyrdom* mission.

After a four hour standoff with police a SWAT team blew a hole through on of the bathroom's walls and a police marksman killed Mateen. The FBI believes he was radicalized on-line for he supported a number of jihadi networks. It could not, however, find any direct link to any foreign terrorist organization. In his rambling phone conversations with police he mentions the death of an IS commander in a US airstrike, the American war against the Taliban in Afghanistan and the death of a friend who fought on behalf of AQ's *Nusra Front* as justifications for his violence.

Shortly after the attack IS *Amaq News Agency* declared Mateen a *soldier* praising the massacre. IS's enthusiasm for Mateen's slaughter of homosexuals is consistent with its homophobic orientation.[100] The caliphate's denunciation of Western sexual *immorality* references homosexuality and the organization routinely kills gays by casting them off tall buildings. IS' discussion of the *grey zone* Western Muslims inhabit speaks to the *corruption* of faith caused by exposure to Western sexual freedoms. This may have impelled Mateen to target the *Pulse* Nightclub.

The Orlando massacre prompted increased security at *Gay Pride* events and homosexual clubs worldwide. IS' targeting of sports stadiums, concerts, night clubs, restaurants, cafes, shopping malls, churches, and trains leaves no civil institution immune from the caliphate's wrath.

This was the case of the attack in New York on October 31, 2017 committed by twenty-nine year old Uzbek immigrant Sayfullo Saipov who rammed a pickup truck into a crowded bicycle lane near the World Trade Center killing eight people.[101] Many of the dead were Argentine tourists celebrating a reunion. Exiting the band Saipov was shot and wounded by police.

Based on initial investigation he was clearly inspired by the IS propaganda. Among the manifold indicators of ideological inspiration were: (1) Saipov's confession to police that he was one of the caliphate's *soldiers* heeding its call to retaliate against the West; (2) a note of support for IS's movement found close to the truck used in the assault; (3) the presence of IS videos and other forms of propaganda on his cell phone and (4) his acquiescence of IS advice to use vehicles as an agents of mass death. Significantly Saipov attacked on Halloween considered by IS partisans as a pagan almost diabolical ritual. Like other IS sympathizers living in the West his radicalization was fueled by cultural aversion and societal alienation.

POST-CALIPHATE TERRORISM?

As its state building project collapses in Iraq and Syria, what then could be the future in IS linked terrorism? Analysts are divided on whether IS can sustain its terror campaign in its post-caliphate era. Some experts contend that the destruction of IS state apparatus across Iraq and Syria, the depletion of its finances and the targeting of its commanders will diminish its capacity to mount operations.[102] IS *virtual network* of a planners and propagandists, moreover, have been hit severely by the coalition's targeted assassination campaign. Destroying IS proto-jihadist state derails its apocalyptic narrative and delegitimizes its ideology making it less attractive for its supporters.

Others, however, are pessimistic. The dismantling of IS' state could force the return of its foreign fighters to their native lands. With some 5,000 Western Europeans jihadi fighters eventually returning to France, Britain, Germany, and Belgium could experience a terrorism upsurge. Richard Barrett in his October 2017 study estimates that some 30 percent of European fighters have returned home.[103] Governments are struggling with an effective response to the returnee problem.

In his forecast of jihadi terrorism Thomas Hegghammer predicts that Islamist terror in Europe will likely continue.[104] He links future jihadi violence to four macro trends that involve economically marginalized Muslim youth, jihadi *entrepreneurs*, conflict in the Muslim world and the growth of internet based encrypted technology. Europe's Islamist micro culture and its network of extremist mosques and organizations provide support for jihadist violence.

Thousands of young people in London, Brussels, Paris and Munich and other European cities have been indoctrinated with extremist ideas by jihadi *entrepreneurs* like Anjem Choudary, Khalid Zerqani, Fabien Cain and Abu Wala. Their incendiary rhetoric has driven them to fight in overseas wars and commit terror at home.

Jihadi terrorism is less severe in the United States. With only two hundred and fifty foreign fighters (half of whom have died in Syria and Iraq) the threat comes less from returning combat veterans than with internet based *homegrown* radicalization. Significantly all of the post 9/11 jihadi terrorism experienced in America is linked to native extremists radicalized across social media channels. The Fort Hood, Orlando, San Bernardino shootings, the New York pickup truck attack and the Boston Marathon bombing can be connected to internet based AQAP or IS propaganda. Though the caliphate's propaganda machine has been damaged by targeted killing of its *virtual planners* and by the depletion of its financial resources its social media channels continue to endure.

Harleen Gambhir argues that internet based encrypted technologies make IS' *virtual caliphate* a certainty.[105] With sectarian conflicts raging across the Muslim world persistent and Salafi-jihadist ideas resonant, IS linked terrorism will generate future security problems. While critically important the destruction of IS' Levant based terror infrastructure will not eradicate the IS movement.

The jihadist movement's resiliency guarantees permanent conflict. Most of this violence will be directed against the Muslim world. The outcome of this struggle, however, has ominous implications for other civilizations. The West continues to struggle against Islamist extremists whose religious zealotry drive them toward pursuing endless *total war* against *real* and *imaginary* enemies.

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Chapter 8

The Jihadist Forever War

Six Key Conclusions

This book's study of modern jihadist movements invites some final reflections. Jihadists have unleashed wars across the Muslim world and have waged systematic terrorism against other civilizations. The *long war* against jihadi terrorism has bred Western frustration and fear. Many American and European experts are troubled by the movement's resilience.[1] Jihadist insurgency has grown across the world and radicalized. Western analysts are increasingly befuddled and pessimistic.[2]

This is not surprising for we expect all conflicts to end. Warfare for Westerners is an unnatural aberration. Jihadists, however, see their violence as a *sacred* duty. Jihadi *rationality* dictates persistent violence against *demonic* adversaries where short-term failures are mere interregnums to *divinely guided* victory. Past Islamist defeats in Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Mali and elsewhere mean little.

Though jihadists are a minority within the Islamic world their subpopulation of supporters is substantial enough to create enormous security problems across the world. More troubling is their numbers are growing.[3] Jihadists are committed to waging a *total war strategy* where killing adversaries is a *sacred act* and *martyrdom* is welcomed. They love death far more than life. Driven by a moral obligation to purify the *umma* and expand *Allah's domain* across the world jihadi persistence suggests permanent unresolved conflict.

The IS has given jihadi terrorism a sectarian and apocalyptic slant that amplifies the movement's barbarism. The West struggles against this terrible reality and is eager to resolve the conflict. Several remedies are

proffered. Most are delusional. Among those palliatives are state-directed counter-radicalization strategies.[4] By *demonstrating* to jihadists that their ideology and actions violate the core foundations of Islam, these programs bow to political correctness.

By exposing the *un-Islamic* character of modern jihadist ideology Western analysts hope extremist organizations will be disempowered dissipating their recruit base. Intent upon decoupling Islam from jihadist violence, former US president Barak Obama's February 2015 *Countering Violent Extremism* conference refused to consider the religious connection to jihadist violence.[5] Countering violent extremism approaches actively use Muslims to dissuade potential jihadists from joining terror networks. The inclusion of *moderate* imams is prioritized in designing a counter-narrative approach to win this *war of ideas*.

Emphasis is put upon *virtual* engagement across social media forums to discredit the religious basis of extremist discourse. This narrative suggests by challenging the *un-Islamic* ideas of jihadists the West can present an alternative vision to win *hearts* and *minds*. While laudatory in its intent Western governments lack the necessary legitimacy to debunk IS' appeal among the young. If AQ has failed to derail the IS's allure among young radicals, Western governments have little chance to do so.

Hoping to avoid a permanent costly *war on terror,* some analysts advocate military disengagement from the Mideast.[6] They contend that the Western military intervention in the Muslim world catalyzes jihadi violence for it is the *life blood* of Islamic extremism. By militarily intervening in the Persian Gulf, assisting Israel and supporting undemocratic states the United States became a convenient target for jihadi rage. This viewpoint suggests that once America disengages in the region jihadist violence will dissipate. Evidence suggests otherwise.

While the US presence is incendiary it is just one factor incubating Islamist insurgency. Jihadists are motivated by many forces far removed from Western military involvement. It is fanciful to believe that American military disengagement from the Mideast will placate jihadi networks whose *sacred mission* is the eradication of Muslim *apostasy* and to restore a caliphate predestined for global conquest.

The ideology impels violence against what they view as the antibody of the Islamic world. Islamist insurgencies rage in Nigeria, Kashmir, the Philippines and Caucasus all far removed from American foreign policy. Persuaded that withdrawing US military forces from Iraq would undermine jihadi forces the Obama administration pivoted American attention to Asia.

It did so at the worst possible time. Iran's Mideast involvement combined with protests against Sunni Arab regimes contributed to jihadi movements driven by sectarian animus and a desire to overthrow *apostate* regimes. It was the perfect context facilitating IS' emergence whose network challenges the territorial sovereignty of multiple states.

Similarly delusional are proposals to advance democracy promotion across the Middle East. The *Arab Spring* produced optimism among Western analysts who saw it disabling the jihadi movement.[7] Nonviolent revolts in Egypt, Tunisia and Bahrain were dominated by street youths skilled in the use of social media who were interpreted as a democratizing force. They accordingly would be the perfect antidote to AQ and Islamist radicals.

Little noticed was the presence of Islamist forces in the protests. This soon became apparent in Egypt where the Muslim Brotherhood dominated early parliamentary and presidential elections. Hoping to capitalize on the fall of Hosni Mubarak, Muhammad Morsi's regime released many jihadists from the country's jails. Far from repressing jihadi activism revolts in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Yemen and Syria catalyzed Islamist insurgencies. The ensuing power vacuum created opportunities for jihadists to mobilize their forces creating condition that spurred even greater instability.

Nonviolent protests against the Assad regime morphed into a civil war where jihadists dominated opposition forces. Extremist forces have been active elsewhere. With over 5,000 jihadi fighters involved in the Syrian conflict Tunisia has since 2011 been struck repeatedly by IS and AQ-linked insurgency. As chapter 5 chronicled Libya and Egypt have confronted jihadi terrorism and insurgency for decades. *Wilayat Sinai* is one of IS' strongest external branches. Had it not been for hundreds of American air strikes, it is questionable that the IS would have been driven from its Sirte, Libya coastal sanctuary.

Young democracies have historically been prone to instability and turmoil. This pattern was repeated in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. Faced with a Mohammad Morsi's *Islamicization* of the country the Egyptian military seized power in 2012 laying the basis for a return to autocratic government. By 2013 Libya was convulsed by a multisided civil war and IS' development of three provinces. Arguably only Tunisia has made a successful democratic transition. Its democratization, however, is fragile and uncertain.

Some suggest that only an Islamic *Reformation* will decisively defeat jihadi terrorism.[8] One rationally expects the development of an intellectual and cultural antibody to jihadism's violent fanaticism if only as a survival mechanism. Most jihadist insurgencies are set in the Islamic world and Muslims are their principal victims. Such a *Reformation* could materialize but when this process will mature is anyone's guess.

Even here we must be cautious. The European Reformation triggered a century of fratricidal religious warfare. Doctrinally separating religious and political authority in the Muslim world will be more complicated and difficult than it was in sixteenth-century Europe.

There are some hopeful signs of Muslim intellectual and cultural resistance to jihadism's violent predations. One hundred leading Muslim clerics in September 2014 signed a letter repudiating Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's caliphate announcement.[9] Muslims are increasingly vocal in denouncing terrorism attacks across the West expressing solidarity with its victims and they have played critical roles in informing security services of terror plots and radicalized individuals.

Western angst over violent religious movements is not surprising for a civilization based upon Enlightenment values. There is no magical panacea available to a war likely to take generations. Given this struggle's permanence what can we say about the core characteristics of the jihadi movement? The book's analysis of the IS movement permits us to make *six conclusions* about the evolution of jihadi ideology and warfare. Hopefully these reflections can guide us on how best to resist rising jihadist terrorism across the world.

JIHADI FAILURE, EXTREMISM AND RESILIENCE

As seen in chapter 1 the jihadist movement has repeatedly failed to achieve its objectives of purging *apostasy* from the Muslim world and constructing a sustainable state. Jihadi insurgencies wither due to external resistance and internal divisions. Revolts in Syria, Egypt, Libya and Algeria during the 1980s and 1990s were defeated by ruthless security services.

Where Sunni Islamic *emirates* have been formed they were destroyed by outside forces. The Taliban's 1996–2001 Afghan Emirate and AQIM's 2013 Malian jihadi state withered before assaults by American and French troops. By the end of 2017 the IS's caliphate collapsed. As Michael W.S. Ryan notes jihadism sows the seeds of its own destruction for the states it create can be destroyed by international actors.[10]

Past defeats, however, did not dissuade jihadi forces from renewing their insurgent campaigns. Islamist extremists believe they are *divinely guided* and are *duty bound* to reignite the jihadist struggle. Driven by religious zealotry and personal ambitions Islamic radicals patiently wait to press forward once more when propitious circumstances arise. Neither the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan nor AQIM linked insurgents in Mali have been *defeated*. After the destruction of their states the Afghan Taliban and AQIM's Sahel branch regrouped. Insurgencies in these countries have recently grown and have become more violent. The failures of the jihadist movement have bred more resilience, extremism and barbarism.

Faced with past reversals, jihadists resort to more draconian tactics to insure future success. Resorting to barbarism presents mujahidin with a fundamental perhaps irresolvable conundrum. While indiscriminate attacks against security services and civilians erode jihadist's popular support base they are critically important in motivating its militants and weakening their opponents. Self-appointed as Allah's *divine agents* and believing most Muslims are in the state of ignorance of *authentic* Islam jihadists opt for a more exclusionary strategy to inspire its foot soldiers and inflict maximum pain on their enemies.

Zarqawi's slaughter of Shi'ites and AQI's targeting of their religious celebrations were designed not only to rid Iraq of *rafidah filth* but make it so ungovernable that international forces would leave the country. Zarqawism serves as the ideological foundation of the IS.[11] Zarqawi's martyrdom drives IS desires to make good upon his vision. Driven by the

need to avenge past defeats, sectarian hatreds and a desire to fulfill *divine destiny* jihadists have become more ideologically extreme.

THE RADICALIZATION OF THE MODERN JIHADI MOVEMENT

The movement's guiding principles of *al wala wal bara* [loyalty and renunciation], *takfir* [excommunication] and *jihad* [religious war] discussed in chapter 2 have radicalized. With their exclusivist community jihadists expand *takfir'*s scope leading them to embark on a *total warfare* doctrine. Clandestine jihadi organizations and the precarious foundation of their militants lives, lends toward exclusion, paranoia and a cavalier attitude toward human life.

Faced with near extinction in 2010 AQI executed more brutal strategies to weaken its adversaries. Its assassination of Sunni Anbar Province leaders and indiscriminate attacks on Shi'ites, Christians and Kurds contributed to its successor's 2014 seizure of power. Once established as the IS the caliphate embarked on a *total warfare* strategy employing terrorism and genocide. The caliphate's fusion of the *near, sectarian* and *far enemy* divide reflects trends that have been building in the jihadist movement for over a generation.

THE NEAR/FAR ENEMY DIVIDE COLLAPSES IN THE PURSUIT OF A "TOTAL WAR" DOCTRINE

The blurring of enemy hierarchies has been identified as a key feature of the post-9/11 jihadi movement. Frustrated by not defeating the *near* nor *far enemy* it is not surprising that jihadists have merged them. The growth of Iranian involvement in the Arab Mideast has added a further sectarian complexion to jihadi war strategy. Jihadists today speak of a *Zionist-Crusader-Rafidah* conspiracy. Driven by intra-jihadi competition and the need to maximize recruitment Islamic extremists *cross hybridize* their opponents. Motivated by sectarian, ethnic and political hatreds young jihadists are attracted to networks that cater to their prejudices.

The *far* and *near enemy* separation, moreover, is narrowed by AQ's fractured network whose branches target multiple enemies. Somalia's Al

Shabaab is at war with African Union (AU) troops and Mogadishu's Western-supported regime and AQIM confronts French, Chadian and Malian forces in the Sahel. AQ in the Arabian Peninsula (AQP) today attacks Shia Houthi rebels, Sunni *apostates* and mounts external operations against the United States and Europe. AQAP's targeting of *sectarian, near* and *far enemies* is not far from its IS competitor *total war* policy.

While known for its *distinctive* strategy of attacking the American *far enemy* AQ's has historically targeted many adversaries. Its preeminent theoretician Ayman al-Zawahiri spent much of his life fighting the Egyptian state. Many of his writings focus on the *near enemy*.[12]

The *Arab Spring's* weakening of regional states has renewed the network's focus on *near enemies* to facilitate their development of terror sanctuaries.

AQ central, moreover, has embraced a *total war* doctrine. In his June 2017 audio address "*One Ummah, One War on Multiple Fronts*" Ayman al-Zawahiri declares:

> Our Ummah today is up against a global war in which Eastern and Western Crusaders, Chinese, Hindus, Safavi Rawadidh [Iranian Shias] and secular nationalists are partners in crime.[13]

Jihadism's *total war* doctrine reaches its highest stage in the IS's emergence. Given its ethno-sectarian hatreds and apocalyptic orientation the IS targets everyone not aligned with its movement. This includes fellow jihadists who do not subscribe to its genocidal project against ethno-sectarian minorities and refuse to give Caliph Ibrahim their loyalty.

Former IS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani proudly declared IS was "at war with the entire world."[14] With attacks across the globe there is merit to Adnani's claim. Despite its respect for Islamic traditions and scripture the IS' fusion of sectarian, apocalyptic and Salafi-jihadist intellectual currents make it a controversial within the mujahidin movement. The caliphate's blending of the most barbarous aspects of tradition and modernity has simultaneously galvanized and repulsed Islamist extremists.

THE IS AS AN ISLAMIST FIFTH WAVE MOVEMENT

Born from AQ's network the IS has created a new jihadist movement infused with *fifth wave* millenarian zeal and ethno-sectarian genocidal hatred.[15] Its movement's founder Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was an outsider in AQ who quarreled with bin Laden and Zawahiri. The Jordanian's exchange of letters with Zawahiri in 2004 underscored the long simmering ideological divisions between Zarqawism and AQ's worldview.[16] These fissures were most palpable in dealing with Zarqawi's sectarian animosity toward the Shia and his ultra-takfirist orientation toward fellow Muslims. With Zarqawi's refusal to alter AQI's takfirist and sectarian strategy tensions would build between the two terrorist networks.

Also troubling to AQ was the apocalyptic ideology of Zarqawi's successors. Will McCant argues that AQ central was perplexed by its Iraqi affiliate fixation on Islamic eschatology, its declaration of an emirate and most of all its belief that one of its leaders was the Mahdi.[17] Such an eschatological orientation had not been seen since the 1979 seizure of the Grand Mosque of Mecca by an apocalyptic cult.

With its radical orientation and disregard for its parent organization, there can be little surprise that the ISIS was expelled from Zawahiri's network. Since its 2014 expulsion the IS has crafted a *fifth wave* movement that synthesizes traditional Salafi-jihadist principles with apocalyptic and sectarian ideals. It is an Islamic version of Jeffery Kaplan's *fifth wave* of terrorism driven by genocidal and apocalyptic ideas.[18]

Cast off by AQ the IS has crafted an original jihadist vision that evokes medieval Islamic glory. The caliphate desires to destroy *apostasy* by creating a new social order. Its terrorist training of children, its destruction of *pagan* architecture, its embrace of sexual slavery, its rigorous enforcement of daily prayers and its idealization of warfare against all established civilizations is not far removed from the Khmer Rouge's fanatical predations. Its belief that it foreshadows a coming apocalypse is consistent with The Lord Resistance Army (LRA) Christian millenarian ideology.

The IS's totalitarian vision has attracted many followers and contributed to the greatest migration of foreign fighters to a conflict zone in history. Young jihadists are attracted to IS's ideational discourse and ultraviolent behavior. Jihadi traditionalists are equally repulsed. By amplifying

jihadism's takfirism and merging it with sectarian and apocalyptic tenets, IS has divided the global jihadist movement.

The ideological appeal of IS vision, furthermore, adheres to the sectarian antagonisms in the Arab world. Since 1979 the spread of Iranian influence accelerated by the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003 has contributed to attractiveness of IS' worldview that presents Sunni Arabs as *victims* of a nefarious *Zionist-Crusader-Rafidah* conspiracy. Combined with Mideast state weakness the IS was able to exploit sectarian animosities and power vacuums allowing it to eradicate colonial era borders and restore the caliphate.

The IS's formation, furthermore, is presented as fulfilling Muslim eschatological visions that internal conflict [*fitnah*] within the *umma* will trigger an apocalyptic encounter between Muslim and Roman armies. The caliphate's evocation of *prophetic methodology* is buttressed by the growth of millenarian sentiment in the Muslim world. Jean-Pierre Filiu argues apocalyptic ideas have grown across the Islamic world and have contributed to theories that prominently speak to Muslim victimization by a demonic American-Zionist cabal.[19] Faced with the IS's and the potency of its sectarian and millenarian vision, AQ has struggled to retain to control an ever fragmenting global jihadist movement.

AQ'S INABILITY TO FIND A SUCCESSFUL POST-9/11 STRATEGY

The network has been badly hurt by its failure to decisively strike the West after 9/11. Since its 2004 attacks in Madrid and 2005 London assault, AQ's external operations have faltered. There are many reasons for this development. Among the most notable is the parent's organization's inability to control the behavior of its regional branches. Bin Laden's Abbottabad correspondence underscores the network's inability to convince its affiliates to pursue its signature *far enemy* strategy.[20]

With its external operations eroded by American drone strikes and encumbered by recalcitrant regional branches AQ's *far enemy* strategy faltered. Relying on its AQAP Yemeni branch the network inspired followers to attack the United States. The Fort Hood, Chattanooga and

Boston attacks, however, pale in comparison with its 9/11, London and Madrid operations.

Unable to effectively execute attacks against the US homeland and hoping to capitalize on the Arab Spring's regional instability AQ switched to *near enemy* focus. Hailed as *pragmatic* by terror experts the transition underscored AQ's inability to direct operations and the network's weakness after post-9/11. So degraded is AQ's *far enemy* doctrine that Zawahiri *directed* his Syrian Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) affiliate not to target the West and concentrate on unifying jihadi ranks to overthrow the Assad regime.

JN's subsequent decoupling from its AQ parent only underscores the independence of AQ's branches. Terror analysts have struggled to explain the network's weakness often proffering confusing explanations. Among the most fashionable is that JN's 2016 AQ *de-association* is a Machiavellian ploy by Zawahiri to *conceal* his control over its Syrian affiliate.[21] Such a *smart* strategy seeks to embed with local insurgencies to *direct* the strategic directions of the global jihadi movement.

Given the centrifugal tendencies of the jihadist movement this *strategy* is problematic. This is amply demonstrated in AQ's *guidance* of its Syrian *affiliate/associate*. Despite Zawahiri's plea for jihadist unity its *Hay'at Tahrir al-Sam* (HTS) *associate* has attacked fellow jihadist groups in Idlib Province and its nationalist orientation and detention of AQ linked officials have invited Zawahiri's condemnation.[22] Growing evidence, moreover, suggests that AQ's 2016 *disassociation* from its former *affiliate* was anything but voluntary. Charles Lister, for example, argues that the decoupling commenced without the high command's knowledge.[23] Zawahiri's subsequent *blessing* of the break may be *face saving*.

Analyzing AQ's experience in Syria, Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi challenges the conventional view that its Syrian affiliate is one of the network's *strongest* branches.[24] He argues that JN's break with AQ was resisted by hard core ideologues within the movement and was uncoordinated with Zawahiri. JN's 2016–2017 re-branding has, moreover, failed to unify jihadist ranks. Isolated in Idlib Province, HTS fights former allies resisting its dominance and faces military pressure from a resurgent Assad regime. Tamimi concludes by chiding analysts who infer AQ's

“strategic brilliance” when the evidence suggests the network has failed in its efforts to control yet another ungovernable “affiliate.”[25]

Al-Tamimi’s conclusion underscores AQ’s utility/disutility as a brand name that *affiliated* organizations can employ or jettison to chart their own strategy. This was made graphically clear by the IS’s break with its AQ parent. Zawahiri’s plea for jihadist *unity* has consistently fallen on deaf ears. The network, moreover, has lost ground in Egypt’s Sinai, Nigeria and Southeast Asia due to former AQ groups aligning with the IS.

This being said AQ remains a potent force in the jihadist world. It has responded vigorously to IS challenges to its network in Mali, Yemen, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Its latest branch AQ in the Greater Sahara (AQGS) has played a pivotal role in escalating attacks in the Sahel.[26] Despite its many efforts the IS has not been able to displace AQ’s *affiliates* in these areas and its attempts at provincial development in these countries remain anemic. The collapse of IS’s caliphate, moreover, gives AQ an opportunity to reestablish its *influence* over the global jihadist movement.

THE RESILIENCE OF THE **IS** *MOVEMENT*

Exploiting the Syrian civil war’s sectarian fissures and the chronic weakness of Post 2003 Iraqi state IS seized power realizing jihadism’s grand ambition to create a caliphate. Prior to the IS’s emergence jihadists looked to the caliphate’s restoration as a long-term aspiration. Baghdadi’s network, however, made it a reality. IS’s proto-jihadist state altered the territorial configuration of the region and continues to present major security challenges. Since 2014 an international coalition comprised of over sixty nations has battled the caliphate whose nascent state has unraveled. Despite Mosul’s conquest by the Iraqi government and the loss of its Syrian capital Raqqa the IS as a terror and insurgent movement endures.

Faced with the liquidation of its physical caliphate IS is reverting back to terrorist insurgency. Despite the loss of over forty thousand militants and battlefield reverses the pace of the caliphate’s terror attacks has not abated. IS sympathizers in 2017 have attacked in London, Barcelona, Paris, Manchester, Tehran, Stockholm, New York and its Southeast Asian affiliates have stormed cities in the Philippines.

As seen in the last chapter European governments fear the return of five thousand foreign fighters that could trigger a new wave of terror attacks. This threat, moreover, was compounded by the inability of the caliphate's European sympathizers to travel to the Levant. Some of whom have heeded the IS's call to turn their rage against their native lands. Western government's efforts to disrupt IS' *virtual* network have faltered. Harleen Gambhir, for example, notes that IS *virtual caliphate* is likely to survive.[27]

Recently re-conquered areas like Iraq's Diyala Province have been re-infiltrated by the IS's network. Iraq and Syria continue to endure the networks assaults.[28] The underlying sectarian and political problems in Iraq and Syria that contributed to the network's emergence show little sign of abating. Widely considered *defeated* IS' predecessor patiently waited to exploit Iraq's Shia dominated government's discriminatory policies and was able to effectively mobilize support among a resentful Sunni minority. Few analysts are confident that Baghdad or Damascus will be able to engineer national reconciliation. The IS's capacity to motivate its sympathizers and exploit their ethno- sectarian hatreds in the service of its *total war* project continues. From the Philippines to Iraq its insurgent-terrorist movement has targeted virtually every continent on the planet.

THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF ISLAMIST IDEOLOGY

Much academic work has been devoted to disproving the religious basis of Islamist terror. Robert Pape's classic work on Palestinian suicide bombers was considered authoritative in its depiction of politically motivated terror far removed from theological values.[29] Similarly the IS's has been interpreted as using religion as a pretext to legitimate a politically driven agenda. Some analysts see the network's reliance on former Baathist military commanders as "proof" that the IS is not motivated by religious dogma.[30]

There is, however, a growing body of literature linking terrorist violence and religious motivation.[31] This is especially true regarding studies of the IS.[32] Religious devotion within the Muslim world is now much stronger than it was during Pape's examination of Hamas *martyrdom* operations. IS'

fanatical implementation of Sharia law, its destruction of *pagan* architecture, its emphasis on *dawa,* the *martyrdom* of thousands of its militants in countless suicide bombings and rigorous efforts to provide a medieval religious foundation for its actions belies the claim that IS is *unreligious*.

The IS's behavior can no longer be dismissed as "gangsterism" divorced from religion. As Graham Wood argues the caliphate takes its religious foundations seriously and is driven by a sincere, if warped, theological devotion.[33] Unlike Osama bin Laden or Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi religious training provides a theological credibility to the IS movement.

The caliphate's publications emphasize its doctrinal purity relative to other jihadi groups. Its sectarian and apocalyptic values stem from its idealization of medieval clerics like Ibn Taymiyyah infusing it with more theological fervor. Given the religious fanaticism of its followers the network will likely be undaunted by the liquidation of its state and it will continue to present myriad security problems. Like AQ that network will remain. What then does this tell us about the future of the jihadi movement and how we might best combat it?

JIHADISM'S ENDURING STRUGGLE: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WEST

It is easy to be pessimistic. The *long war* against Islamist terror shows no sign of dissipating. We must furthermore recognize that a complete 'destruction' or 'defeat' of the movement is unlikely. Resilience is one of jihadism's enduring hallmarks. This does not imply, however, the jihadists will be successful. Theirs is a utopian project. Jihadi states are vulnerable to external pressure and their insurgent-terror movements are weakened by chronic internal divisions. While troublesome jihadi insurrections rarely succeed in overthrowing regimes. The harm they produce can be contained.

Though the West cannot fashion a grand *counter-narrative* to disable jihadism's appeal, it can undertake practical measures to mitigate its security threats. We can, for example, expose jihadi group's atrocities against fellow Muslims and publicize the statements of defectors to discredit them. Western governments, moreover, need to be proactive in

disrupting jihadist networks through defensive and offensive operations. Since the 9/11 attacks airport security measures have largely foiled terrorist infiltration of passenger planes and their use as weapons of mass destruction. Another of the lessons of 9/11 is that unwillingness to engage in military action against extremist organizations rarely works.

Since the Twin Towers and Pentagon attacks the United States has pursued a policy of targeted assassination of terrorist commanders that has laid waste to AQ's external operations network.

The *Predator* and *Reaper* drone attacks in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Yemen have been an indispensable means to disrupt AQ's command and control capacity.[34] In his Abbottabad correspondence bin Laden contemplated moving AQ's operations out of Waziristan for the region had become a kill zone for so many of the networks top commanders.[35] This speaks tellingly of the program's effectiveness.

Though drone attacks cannot *defeat* terrorist organization they can degrade external operations units and their killing of senior commanders invites leadership disputes in terrorist organizations. As seen in the chapter 7 targeted killing has eliminated many of the most talented IS *virtual planners* committed to attacks on the West. Much maligned for the civilian *casualties* they generate, targeted assassination programs are the least bad option in *grey zone* conflicts where it is notoriously difficult to distinguish *combatants* from *civilians.*

Though it is sensible to limit large scale military commitments in the war against terrorist networks the presence of training camps often makes this unavoidable. The number of soldiers necessary to destroy jihadi camps and training facilities, however, need not be considerable. The French 2013 military intervention in Mali, illustrated in chapter 6, largely succeeded in ending AQIM's jihadi state and its use of light mobile forces and proxy allies mirrors the success of the 2001 American military operations against the Taliban and its AQ allies. Based on the French model US military commanders have developed an expeditionary force to rapidly respond to terror networks across the Mediterranean basin.

We do, however, need to avoid large counterinsurgency operations aimed at democracy promotion and nation-building. Afghanistan and Iraq has shown that this strategy is very costly and problematic. These types of

interventions are inherently inflammatory and can boost recruitment of jihadists eager to defend the *umma* against *Crusader* forces. Islamist hatred of the *foreign outsider* remains a potent catalytic force.

The war against jihadist networks cannot be avoided or ignored. It is a permanent conflict where we need to demonstrate the resilience, ruthlessness and patience of our enemies. We furthermore cannot decisively end this war. Only Muslims can do so. Despite some hopeful signs of Islamic resistance to jihadi extremism little evidence exists that a countermovement has gained sufficient strength to disable jihadism's appeal among the young. Until this uncertain point we are confronted with the specter of a *forever war*. This is a reality that we must accept.

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